

Disability NOW

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Does Labour care?

Disabled people's minister Maria Eagle has told *Disability Now* that it is "right" that winter fuel payments are not extended to severely disabled people.



The minister told *DN* in a letter that the payments should only be made to older people.

Yet Eagle acknowledged that the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) only provided a "contribution" towards the extra costs of a severe disability, which "could include heating".

Her remarks sparked anger among other Labour politicians.

Lord Ashley, chair of the All Party Parliamentary Disability Group, described her reply as "frosty and unacceptable".

He said: "It means that severely disabled people will continue to be deprived of the winter fuel payment regardless of their need and the powerful logic of their case. But we will continue to fight for it."

Labour MP Roger Berry also

said her remarks were "unacceptable".

He said: "The level of DLA itself is clearly inadequate to meet most of the costs of disability and certainly the costs of keeping warm in the winter."

"On the basis of the government's own figures, approximately the same proportion of severely disabled people are in fuel poverty as pensioners."

"I am very disappointed, because I do not think her argument stands up to careful examination. We will carry on trying to persuade her to change her mind."

Aileen Grist, from Oldham, a severely disabled wheelchair user, who accompanied *DN* editor Mary Wilkinson and other campaigners to a meeting with Eagle in November, said she was "disappointed" but "not surprised".

"Maybe if the disability charities make a big donation to the Labour Party, something will get done," she said.

Although the Disability Rights Commission backs the campaign, its chair, Bert Massie, would not comment on Eagle's letter.

Mike Hurdiss, benefits policy officer for Scope, said: "It is time for the government to acknowledge that further work needs to be done to assess the adequacy of disability benefits provision and to enter into a serious debate on the extent of disability poverty, of which fuel poverty forms an important part."

Roger Berry's Early Day Motion on winter fuel payments has been signed by 158 MPs. 1,300 *DN* readers have replied to a survey explaining why they need the payments, and there are 4,000 supporters.

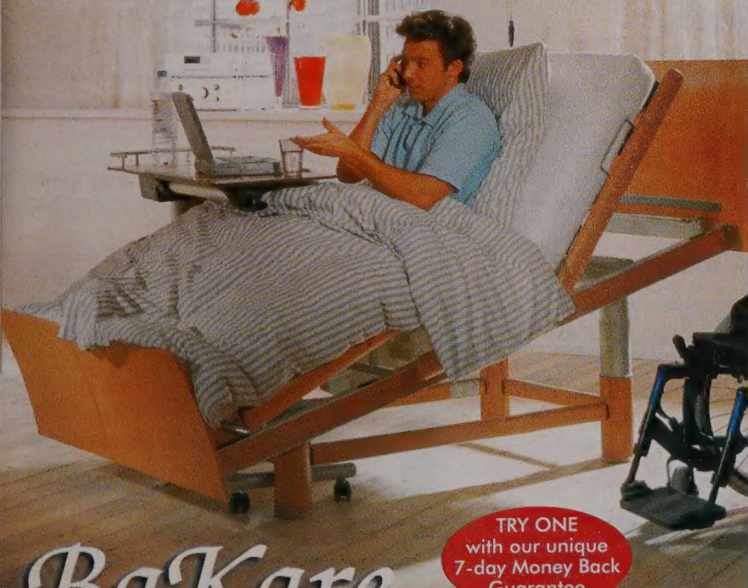


PETE PHILLIPS

Frozen out: Aileen Grist at home in Oldham. She and her husband can't afford to have their leaky roof repaired. They don't have a social life or holidays and spend all summer paying off their winter fuel bills.

Organisations supporting the campaign: The Disability Rights Commission, British Polio Fellowship, Disabled Drivers' Association, Disabled Drivers' Motor Club, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Spinal Injuries Association and the consortium Disability Daily, comprising Arthritis Care, British Deaf Association, Carers UK, Disability Alliance, Headway, Leonard Cheshire, Mencap, MIND, Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, National Autistic Society, RADAR, Royal National Institute for the Blind, RNID, Scope and Sense.

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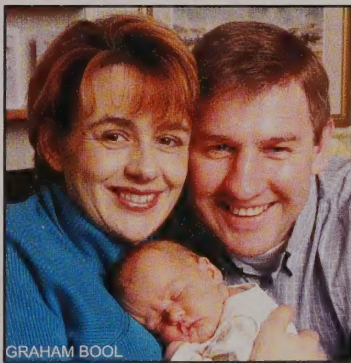


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Golden girl!

Paralympic athlete Tanni Grey-Thompson says her new daughter is better than all her medals put together – but the proud first-time mum is already eyeing up a return to sport.

Tanni's daughter was born at 9.55am on Monday, 4 February, at the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, weighing 7lbs 12oz.

Tanni and her husband Ian (above, right) named her Carys Olivia. Carys was Tanni's original Christian name.

"She is better than all my medals put together. I am enjoying every moment with Carys. She is just perfect," said Tanni.

Crackdown on cheap scooters

A charity which was undercutting retail prices on electric scooters by £900 has been told it can no longer buy them direct from the main supplier.

The HAND Partnership in Norwich was charging £955 for Shoprider Sovereign scooters, which can cost more than £1850 from other dealers.

But DMA Days Medical which can sell the scooters to retailers at a trade price of £720, has now said that it will not sell the scooter to HAND. It told the charity that it had received letters from dealers "concerned" at HAND's pricing. The company said that it needed to ensure that scooters were sold by suppliers which provided adequate warranty repairs and aftercare to customers, and had not known HAND was selling scooters.

HAND chief executive, Gary Gilden, said he was disgusted at the prices some dealers

charged. He said: "I recognise that people do need to make a profit but we are dealing with elderly, disabled and vulnerable people."

DMA refused to comment.

Ray Hodgkinson, director of the British Healthcare Trades Association of which DMA is a member, said: "Margins that are built in by reputable dealers are there to cover for warranty work, services and additional work that comes up. People shopping round to get the cheapest deal should make sure that everything is there in terms of back-up."

Meanwhile, Norman Lamb, Liberal Democrat MP for North Norfolk, is calling for government action to tackle other firms which sell sometimes inappropriate disability equipment like stairlifts and scooters. He said: "There have got to be some clearer rules of the game."

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www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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FRONT COVER: PARALYMPIC CHAMPION TANNI GREY-THOMPSON CELEBRATES THE BIRTH OF CARYS. SEE STORY ON PAGE ONE. © GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

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Want to be an undercover agent?

The Baywatch campaign needs people willing to check out their local supermarket one day soon to see how many disabled bays are being abused. The more people who take part, the better our snapshot of abuse over the country. If you would like to help, e-mail editor@disabilitynow.org.uk or phone 020 7619 7323.



Sheer effort: A pupil at Abbot's Lea Special School in Liverpool gets to grips with a climbing wall, part of a £3.7 million scheme that has replaced the old school for autistic children with new state-of-the-art buildings and facilities.

Baywatch gears up



A government minister has agreed to meet members of the Baywatch Campaign to discuss parking bay abuse.

Transport Minister Sally Keeble said she shared the campaign's concerns, particularly those relating to private car parks. She said its stance was "most welcome".

Keeble will meet representatives of the campaign and supermarkets Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Sainsbury's on 19 March.

Meanwhile, officers from a second police force have been photographed parking in a disabled parking space outside a supermarket.

Last month, *DN* reported

how two officers were being investigated by Greater Manchester Police for allegedly parking their van in a disabled bay outside an Asda store.

Now, South Wales Police is investigating allegations that two officers parked their van in a disabled space outside a Tesco store in Cardiff at 12.30am one morning last month and popped inside to buy sandwiches.

Supt Kevin Tumelty, of South Wales Police, said he would draw his officers' attention to the alleged incident and speak to the two officers concerned.

Simon Blake and Tracey Parker, from Newport, who took pictures of the van, told *DN*: "It

was totally irresponsible to park in that spot, considering there were other spots available."

Tesco has promised to investigate the incident and another in Southampton in which a shopper accused late-night staff of using disabled bays.

Meanwhile, gas company Transco has apologised and begun an investigation after one of its vans was spotted in a disabled space in Newport, south Wales.

And Safeway has launched a working party to tackle issues related to the Disability Discrimination Act, including Baywatch, while Asda has produced ideas for a public awareness campaign.

Private sector sparks fear

Disability groups and London transport chiefs fear plans to sell off the Underground could allow companies to do the bare minimum to improve access.

Bob Kiley, Commissioner of Transport for London (TfL), raised concerns with London Underground (LU) in January at plans to partly privatise the tube. Campaigners fear that contracts for the Public Private Partnership (PPP) would allow companies to challenge LU if they objected to any plans to make improvements which went beyond the Disability Discrimination Act.

LU refused to say what was

in the three final contracts, but *DN* understands the clauses are in at least one of them.

Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, said: "Companies doing the bare minimum could have a negative impact on the quality of the service for disabled people."

"Inaccessible public transport systems can prevent disabled people getting a job, going shopping or using the capitals leisure facilities."

The disability transport charity DaRT condemned the whole PPP plan.

Brian Heiser, special adviser to TfL on disability, feared companies would try to save

money by doing "as little as they can possibly get away with".

He called on the government to act to ensure that no such clauses were in the final contracts, which will govern the running of the tube for 30 years.

He said: "Anything that says the underground will only do the legal bare minimum has got to be inferior."

A spokesperson for LU, said: "LU is committed to improving accessibility of the network."

There is no evidence to suggest that any of the preferred bidders are planning to challenge LU."

Plans to save foundation

Financial experts are examining a business plan that could save a factory that employs 42 disabled people and is backed by the Queen Mother.

The plan, which aims to save the jobs of staff at the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation (QEF) factory in Leatherhead, was presented to the charity's executive committee last month.

An independent auditor and an accountant from the Employment Service are working through the plan with the charity, and a 30-day consultation period with factory staff has been extended.

The factory, which does ceramic work, mailing and packaging, has been facing severe financial problems, as has the foundation itself.

Julia Battyll, QEF's public relations manager, said: "The business plan they are putting forward is to retain the business."

"The staff are all hoping, as we all are, that a viable solution will be reached."

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Tube map breaks new ground

A groundbreaking London underground map giving details of access to tube stations has been published.

The map, adapted from the London underground map, also includes stations on the Docklands Light Railways (DLR). It shows the 82 stations that have alternative access to stairs and escalators and 52 interchanges that are

accessible at platform level.

The Tube Access Guide has been produced by Scope, London Underground (LU) and Transport for London (TfL).

Paul Goodier, LU managing director, said: "It's the first guide which details the now growing accessibility of the tube by highlighting stations which have lifts and step free access to platforms. It opens up the tube

to a wider group of people."

Wheelchair user and student Maryam Zonouzi said: "Even though many stations are not accessible, at least I can plan my routes with confidence and not have to rely solely on cabs."

Available at all tube and DLR stations, Travel Information Centres, the TfL Access and Mobility Unit. Tel: 020 7941 4600 and www.thetube.com



Pantastic: MPs and peers joined together in pancake races to support the brain injury charity Rehab UK

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Government overhaul

The government has replaced nearly half the members on its Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee.

More than three-quarters of the 21 members on the new-look committee, which advises the Minister for Transport on accessibility, are now disabled.

Jane Wilmot, who is deaf, has been reappointed chair, and new members include David Pugh, a trustee of the Manic Depressive Fellowship, the first member with mental health interests, Thomas Martin Pey, director of policy for The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, who is blind, and Glynn Vernon, a wheelchair user and former member of Scope's executive council.

*www.dptac.gov.uk

Nancy Robertson



Diana Twitchin writes:

Nancy Robertson, who died suddenly last week, will be greatly missed.

Her work on disability issues spanned over 30 years. In 1973, she developed the Brent Association for Disabled People and then worked on issues including benefits, housing, empowering disabled people and the education of medical and health care professionals. As director of the Prince of Wales Group on Disability, she initiated the Living Options work that laid down principles underpinning service provision for disabled people.

One of a generation of young people disabled by polio in the 1940s and denied access to a professional career, Nancy created a very positive role for herself. She once said: "You do not have to shout to get the message over". She used persistence and persuasion to great effect, and was willing to share experience and knowledge to solve problems.

Government gripes

Campaigners have condemned the government for putting the interests of care home owners above those of elderly residents.

They claim that new guidance given under the Care Standards Act to the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) lets home owners out of making changes which would improve the quality of life of elderly residents.

In a letter to the NCSC, which will enforce the standards from April, Health Minister

Jacqui Smith says that homes need not install lifts if stair lifts will do, and need not have special baths if they have walk in showers. And not all doorways will need to be sufficiently wide to allow wheelchair users through without being pushed.

Ms Smith said the guidance had been issued to ensure that the NCSC did not close down good homes. The priority for enforcement would be homes where there is a clear danger to residents.

But the Coalition for Quality in Care (CQC) which includes Age Concern and Carers' UK, accused the government of discriminating against older people.

Dr Gillian Dalley, coordinator of the CQC, said: "It is not good enough just to say it is ok as long as people's lives are not in danger. We thought the government was really resolved to ensure that adequate standards were in place, and at this late stage she is going back on it."

2004 countdown

Britain's two million businesses and services are being urged to install access features like ramps and remove physical barriers before they are forced to do so in 2004.

The call came with the launch of a new *Code of Practice on Rights of Access to Businesses and Services for Disabled People*. The code, produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), sets out what physical alterations firms and services must make to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

To help small businesses understand their duties, the DRC has produced a guide called *A Practical Guide for Small Businesses*, which tells them what reasonable adjustments they may have to make. This could include creating

level access to a building, moving the entrance to a more convenient place or fitting handrails on steps.

Andy Shipley, policy analyst at the DRC, said: "We hope that service providers will see this as an opportunity. There are two years to the deadline to put things in place, carry out access audits and put plans into action."

Once the requirement to alter physical features comes into effect in 2004, service providers and shops could be sued if they fail to make alterations.

The commission has also produced a guide 2004 – *What it Means for Disabled People*, a summary of rights under the new code aimed at disabled people.

DRC, tel: 08457 622633 or www.drc-gb.org

Scheme less mean

Acharity providing cars to disabled people is to change its contract arrangements after criticism from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Motability has made changes to the way it will terminate people's contract and take away their cars.

This can happen when someone has their Disability Living Allowance stopped, if the nominated driver is no longer able to drive the car or because of fraud and abuse.

The OFT has said that the seven days notification that a

contract will be terminated and the car removed is unfair. A spokesperson for Motability Finance Limited (MFL), the charity's financial arm, said this was to be extended to 14 days to allow customers more time to resolve disputes with the Benefits Agency or find another driver, for instance. But she stressed the Motability scheme had already been revising its contracts.

And she added: "It has to be a very extreme case before we terminate someone's agreement."



The appliance of science: (from left to right) David Buckley, Michelle Middleton and Joanne Lewis, who are pupils at the Sandfield Park School, scooped top prize in a competition run by the Association for Science Education. They met Colin Hilton (second from left), executive director for Life Long Learning.

Mencap sounds alarm

The charity Mencap has called on the government to find another £70 million a year to help modernise day services for people with learning disabilities.

In a new report,* Mencap says there is a risk that social services departments will end up providing "inadequate third rate services" without such funding.

Last year's *Valuing People* white paper proposed major changes to day services and called for less reliance on traditional day centres.

This was to be one of the priorities of a Learning Disability Development Fund of up to £50 million a year.

But Mencap's report says this funding is "inadequate" and needs to be increased to at least £120 million a year.

Another £140 million per year is needed to expand day services so they can also be used by the 20,000 people who currently lack any provision.

* *A Life in the Day, better day services for people with a learning disability, available free from www.mencap.org.uk or tel: 0808 808 1111.*

DisabilityNOW's

EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT APRIL 2002

The April issue will carry an employment supplement, with the theme "Wise up to Work", including: Information and experiences to help disabled people get into work and stay in work • Excellent employment practice • What the government is doing for disabled people • "Getting started" concentrating on CV's and interview techniques • Access to work and mentoring schemes • Sheltered employment • Rehab & retraining • Stress and problems at work.

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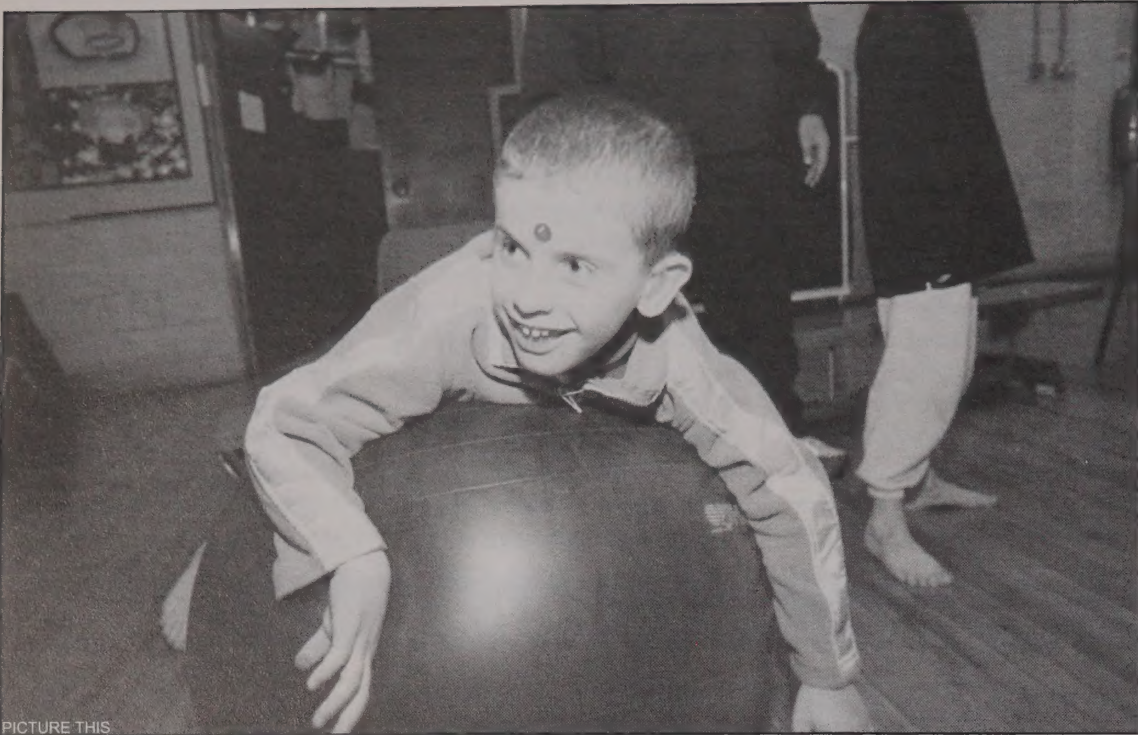
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PICTURE THIS

Having a ball: Pupils at Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children in London are taking part in a dance project with the Roundhouse theatre funded by the Abbey National.

Rail plans welcomed

Disability groups have welcomed a new code of practice aimed at improving train and station services for disabled passengers.

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) code sets standards for accessibility and creates a system to monitor performance.

It will be followed by a review of how individual operators are measuring up to these standards.

By the end of 2002, all operators that own a railway station will have to tell the SRA how they plan to prioritise the necessary improvements, including work on ramps,

passenger information, toilets, barriers, kerbs, seats, signs and staff training.

The SRA will then examine how the work can be funded.

Geraldine Peacock, chief executive of The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, said she hoped the code would bring "real improvements to the accessibility of stations for visually impaired people".

Jane Wilmot, chair of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), welcomed the "practical and deliverable" code.

Meanwhile, Railtrack has postponed plans for

a £900,000 revamp of Edinburgh's Haymarket station that would have improved disabled access.

A spokesman for Railtrack in Scotland said its priority was to improve the infrastructure of the rail network and work on accessibility would have to wait until funds were available.

He said: "The aspiration is to make the entire network, including Haymarket, fully accessible and we will be looking at ways of doing that, together with our partners, the SRA and the Scottish Executive."

Parking nightmare for school-run mum

A disabled mum who faces a 20 minute walk to deliver her three disabled children to school is fighting for the right to use the staff car park.

Chairman Carter says more should be done to make it easier for her to take her children to and from Micklands primary school in Reading.

The school has provided a disabled parking space in the parents' car park, but it is often used by non-blue badge holders.

It is also a 20 minute walk from the car park to the classroom, which is extremely difficult for Mrs Carter who has arthritis, a hearing impairment and a seriously

ill two-year-old daughter.

An attempt to arrange for a member of staff to escort the children failed because Mrs Carter had to drop her oldest daughter at another school and was often late.

A spokesman said Reading Borough Council and the school were "sympathetic" and were considering proposals to help the Carters and other disabled families.

But Mrs Carter said: "My feeling is that they will not act unless a gun is put to their heads."

She added: "I am very annoyed. It is unnecessary. We do not need this added pressure."

Loophole closure bid

An MP is trying to close a loophole in the law that allows disabled and older people to be informally detained in mental health hospitals.

People who lack the capacity to consent, including those with severe learning disabilities or Alzheimer's, can be held and treated against the wishes of their carers, who have no right of appeal.

Labour MP Helen Clark has proposed a Ten Minute Rule Bill to plug the gap in the law.

The problem was highlighted by the case of an autistic man detained in a hospital for

four months against his carers' wishes (see DN February).

Mencap has supported the bill and called on the government to introduce new legislation.

Ms Clark said: "The gap in the law as it stands can lead to serious injustice for a vulnerable group of individuals."

"I am determined to impress on the government that reform is urgently needed so that people who are informally detained have the same safeguards and right to appeal as those detained under the mental health act".



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In brief

Correction

On page 29 of last month's DN we wrongly said that Satta Hashem was from Iran. He is in fact from Iraq. We apologise for any misunderstanding.

Loo lowdown

The first guide to describe what you will find behind the doors of England's accessible loos has been published by a disability charity.

The ITAAL (Is There An Accessible Loo?) *Directory of Accessible Loos in England** offers details on 1,400 accessible loos, such as the position of sinks, access to cubicles, height of loos, charges, opening hours and parking information.

In addition, it includes the locations of more than 2,600 other loos.

* The directory is £10 (plus £4.50 p&p) and is available from ITAAL c/o Equal Ability, 170 Benton Hill, Wakefield Road, Horbury, West Yorks WF4 5HW.

Authorities may sue

Health authorities are considering legal action to prevent them having to fund all drugs approved by the government's clinical excellence watchdog.

The government announced in December that health authorities would have to pay for all treatments approved by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

But Helen Marlow, pharmaceutical advisor for Croydon Health Authority (CHA), told DN that a barrister had suggested health authorities also had a legal duty to balance their books. This might conflict with the government's demand.

She said: "We are looking at taking advice about how much we have to follow the government's advice on NICE. Some NICE guidance we agree with. Other guidance we do not feel is a priority."

CHA had earlier told a

parliamentary inquiry into NICE that the obligation to fund all approved drugs meant less money was available for "local priorities".

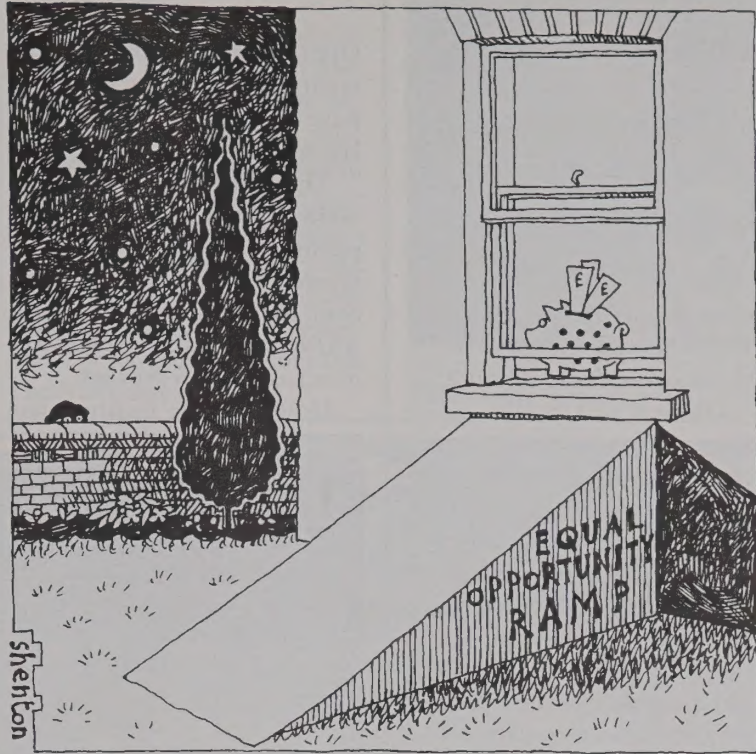
And the inquiry heard that funding the approved drugs would cost Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Authority an extra £15 million in 2002/2003.

Meanwhile, the government has agreed a "payment by results" scheme with drugs companies to fund the multiple sclerosis (ms) drugs beta interferon and glatiramer acetate.

All suitable patients with ms will receive the drugs but payments to the companies will be cut if treatment does not work.

The announcement was welcomed by ms charities, which earlier criticised NICE's decision that the drugs were too expensive to be funded on the NHS.

Disabled lookout escapes locker



A would-be burglar with no legs has avoided prison after admitting he acted as a lookout.

Robert Bate, 22, of Seaham, County Durham, tried to escape the scene on his bottom after he and two other men were disturbed outside a house they were trying to break into.

Teesside Crown Court heard how Bate was picked up by one of the other men as they escaped.

But Bate, who has previous convictions for burglary, was found by police the next day.

Peter Schofield, defending, said: "It may represent some form of defiance... to show he can manage as well as anyone else with his disability."

Bate was given a two-year community rehabilitation order.

Council payout

A council has been told to pay more than £23,000 to the family of a pensioner wrongly assessed as needing nursing instead of residential care.

The Local Government Ombudsman found that Nottinghamshire County Council had made mistakes in dealing with the case, which led to the family paying higher fees than it needed to.

Ombudsman Patricia Thomas said she was "appalled" at the casual way the assessment was carried out by a social worker in 1995.

Nottingham City Council, which took over responsibility for social services in 1998, has apologised to the daughter and son-in-law of the woman, who has since died, for a delay in dealing with their complaint.

Meanwhile, Hertfordshire City Council has been told to pay compensation to a man with multiple sensory impairment and ataxia, for failing to provide him with adequate services.

Special measures on giving evidence

People with learning disabilities will soon be able to give evidence in crown courts via live TV links, under vital new rules announced by the government.

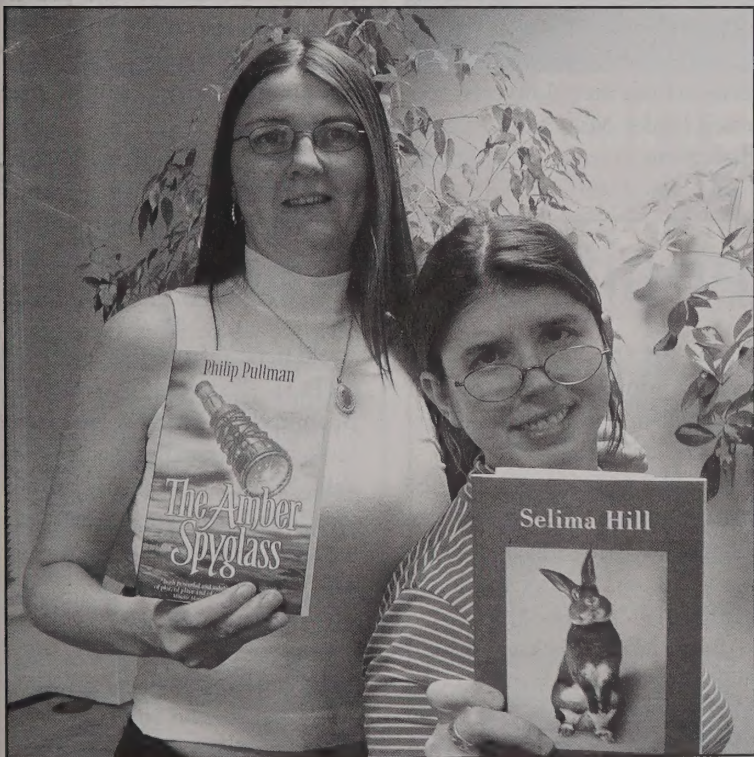
The new guidance* outlines how the government is finally implementing legislation to help vulnerable or intimidated witnesses give evidence as effectively as possible.

It will help the police, Crown Prosecution Service and courts introduce measures from the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999.

From August, vulnerable or intimidated witnesses giving evidence in a crown court will be able to ask the judge for "special measures", such as giving evidence via a live TV link or using screens to block the defendant from view.

Other measures, including the use of intermediaries to help witnesses give evidence, and guidelines for magistrates courts should be introduced by 2004.

* The guidance is online at www.homeoffice.gov.uk



Bookworms: Lorainne Bellamy (left) and Amy Clarke (right) were among six learning disabled people who joined a reading group to review shortlisted books for the 2001 Whitbread Book Awards.

In brief

Thanks for stamps

Thank you to DN readers who responded to our appeal for used postage stamps. Please keep sending them in to us.

DLA claim increase

Claims for Disability Living Allowance increased by 5 per cent to 2.27 million in the year ending August 2001, government figures show.

The figures also show that there was a rise of 2 per cent in people receiving Attendance Allowance, to 1.29 million.

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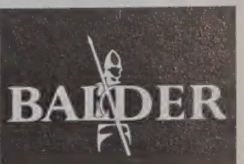
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Letter from Brussels



Richard Howitt



Euro MPs vote disability rights into the public procurement directive

Twenty years ago, the Thatcher government banned contract compliance. Progressive local authorities had begun to use contracts with private companies to ensure they complied with better employment policies for disabled people. But the authorities were told to stop doing it and that cheapest was best.

However, campaigners never forgot that governments across Europe spend £600m of public money – a powerful lever on business practice.

So, when the European Parliament debated a public procurement Directive last month, Euro MPs seized the chance to raise disability rights.

When taxpayers' money is being used, why can't higher standards be required of private companies? After all, no one forces them to tender for public contracts.

European officials have resisted such arguments, ignoring existing laws in the USA and Canada. There was even an attempt to outlaw

contract compliance in France in 1998, which was overturned by the European Court of Justice.

Our vote said that the interests of the wider community should come before the narrow interests of the contracting authority. Equal treatment for disabled workers should be identified in the list of eligible criteria when contracts are decided, and companies prosecuted for violating labour legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act, should not be considered at all.

In response to campaigns by Britain's GMB trade union and disability organisations, provisions were inserted allowing exclusive contracts to support sheltered employment for disabled workers and "design for all" criteria for publicly purchased goods and services.

European governments could resist these landmark votes in the Second Reading later this year, but I think this is a battle we will win.

Richard Howitt MEP is President of the European Parliament All-Party Disability Group, www.edf-feph.org/en/policy/transport/trans_pol.htm, e-mail: ep@edf-feph.org.

More work but staff worries

Operations for joint replacements and cataract removals have leaped ahead in the last year.

The figures, contained in NHS Performance Indicators published by the Government, showed an increase of 6.4 per cent for joint replacements while cataract removals increased by 12.3 per cent.

However, the figures also

showed a 21.6 per cent increase in vacancies for staff like physiotherapists and speech therapists.

The Government claimed this was because it was increasing the workforce and therefore there were more jobs available. The number of people in such jobs had actually increased by four per cent, it claimed.

But a spokesman for

the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, said: "We have been very disappointed by the lack of NHS workforce planning on this issue."

"Physiotherapy is a popular degree course but the public sector faces real difficulties retaining experienced physiotherapists. These retention problems must be addressed urgently."

2004 care deadline

Health authorities and social services have been given until 2004 to start working together to decide the care needs of elderly people.

The Department of Health has issued guidance on single assessments which aim to avoid elderly people having to repeat the same information to different health and social care professionals in order to get care services.

Health Minister Jaqui Smith said: "All too often assessment is done to older people rather than with them, and is often duplicated by professionals because information is not shared."

More information: www.doh.gov.uk/publications/coin.htm



Quids in: Pupils from a Liverpool special school met Hollyoaks star Terri Dwyer and Liverpool City Council leader Mike Storey at the launch of Change for Liverpool, which aims to raise £1 million a year for charity through donations from council staff.

Chemical sensitivity charity bid

A woman disabled by multiple chemical sensitivity (mcs) wants to launch the country's first charity to help other people with the condition.

She hopes the charity will secure a grant from a multi-million pound trust fund.

Gillian McCarthy is forced by her illness to live in a freezing hut in a Somerset field, while she waits for her council to build suitable housing (see DN December).

She needs to raise up to £2,000 to obtain charitable

status for the Safe as Houses Trust, which will carry out research and provide support for people with mcs.

She then hopes to apply for funds from The Tubney Charitable Trust (TCT), set up by Miles and Briony Blackwell in 1997.

Both Mrs Blackwell, who had mcs, and her husband, the former chairman of the Blackwell publishing empire, died last year.

They left £30 million to TCT and one of the areas which

could benefit from it is mcs.

TCT trustee Jonathan Burchfield said: "We want to look into how the charity can help, but we are pausing for six months to get expert advice so we can learn the most effective way to provide funding."

Information about TCT is online at: www.tubney.org.uk Nikki Hiscock, Ms McCarthy's advocate, can be contacted at 6 Tor View Avenue, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 8AE or by email at: helper@safeashouses.fsnet.co.uk

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New boss for MS Society

Mike O'Donnovan has been appointed chief executive of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Mr O'Donnovan, 55, spent most of his career in consumer health care with Beecham Products, and was closely involved with the merging of Beecham with SmithKline.

He has been personally involved with the society since 1994 after one of his sons was diagnosed with the condition.

He begins work in April.

Dope hopes



The Metropolitan Police will decide this month whether to extend a scheme in which people found in possession of cannabis are cautioned instead of charged across the whole of London.

The force says it will consider factors such as how the scheme has affected crime in the pilot area of Lambeth and neighbouring boroughs before it decides whether to extend it.

Andrew Coldwell, of the Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics, which campaigns for decriminalisation of cannabis for medicinal purposes, said an extension across the city would be "a step in the right direction".

Yet the Police Federation, which represents grassroots officers, has told a parliamentary inquiry into drugs policy that the government should "reject the urgings of those who are calling for the legalisation or decriminalisation of so-called soft drugs".

Meanwhile, GW Pharmaceuticals (GW), which is developing cannabis-based medicines, has announced a new trial into the treatment of cancer pain with more than 100 patients who have terminal cancer.

New evidence from clinical trials has shown that people with multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury treated with GW's medicines showed "significant improvements" in a range of symptoms.

The company plans to seek government approval for its first cannabis-based prescription medicine next year.

Sculpture bid

A disability activist has launched a fundraising campaign to build the world's first memorial sculpture for disabled victims of the holocaust.

Dr Paul Darke who is behind the campaign, had earlier spoken on UK Holocaust Memorial Day, telling a Manchester audience that disabled people were the first victims of the Nazis. Over 400,000 were gassed or sterilised. Dr Darke hopes to raise up to £40,000 to pay for the sculpture and an education pack for schools. The Manchester audience included Home Secretary David Blunkett, Conservative Party Leader Ian Duncan-Smith and Liberal Democrat Leader Charles Kennedy.

For more information on the campaign, www.the-chair.com

Playground plans

Charities have welcomed the government's decision to draw up guidelines on making play areas more accessible.

Liberal Democrat MP Adrian Sanders had been due to introduce a private members bill on the need for inclusive playgrounds for disabled children, but dropped his plans after the government agreed to act.

Nicola Burrows, develop-

ment officer of the charity Action for Leisure, which promotes play and leisure for disabled adults and children, said the government's announcement was "really positive".

Richard Kramer, Mencap's head of campaigns, said: "We are delighted that the government has recognised the importance of integrated play towards children's development."



Go go Jo: Jo Smyth (centre), who is disabled, was named National Millennium Volunteer of the Year in January.

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Screen at birth

A charity has criticised the government for failing to introduce screening for deafness among all newborn babies in England.

The criticism came after the Welsh Assembly promised to introduce the tests this year.

Current tests are only 50 per cent reliable and take place at eight months, whereas Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) can be carried out within 48 hours of birth and is near perfect.

The Royal National Institute of Deaf People (RNID) wants to introduce UNHS throughout England, but the government is

to pilot the test in just 22 of the 100 English health authorities over the next three years.

James Strachan, RNID chief executive, said: "If Wales can achieve this with ease, why do English patients have to wait until 2005?"

But he added: "This is great news for Wales. The test is neither complex nor expensive yet it can make an enormous difference to every deaf child."

Early diagnosis allows families and professionals to work with the child before substantial communication problems build up, the charity said.

Lack of support revealed in report

Only one third of parents with very young deaf-blind children receive support to prepare them to attend school, a recent survey has shown.

The findings, included in the *Breaking Out** report, published by the charity Sense, were released as part of a new campaign to fight isolation of deaf-blind children and young people.

The campaign Reach Out was launched by Lord Ashley in January.

The survey of 166 parents

showed that less than one in eight deaf-blind children of school age received support to access activities or events with other children. Only half the parents had any respite care arranged by social services.

Dr Tony Best, Sense chief executive, said the charity wanted to "encourage service providers to better meet the needs of deaf-blind children and young people throughout the country."

* tel: 020 7272 7774

website: www.sense.org.uk

News review

DN rounds up news covered in the mainstream media over the last few weeks

Social care anger

The government is putting older people's lives at risk because of its "chronic underfunding" of social care, it was claimed.

A report prepared by 21 organisations that work with older people, including Age Concern, suggested that thousands are denied care at home because of social services rationing.

It also claimed that more than 35,000 beds have been lost in the last three years due to residential and nursing home closures.

Researchers hit back

Doctors and scientists hit back at anti-vivisection groups by launching a new campaign to explain why animals have to be used in medical research.

The Research Defence Society quoted researchers, vets and surgeons, as well as patients, who benefit from drugs developed through such experiments.

Payback time

The Ministry of Defence apologised after admitting it had been mistakenly taxing army disability pensions that should have been tax free since 1952.

The government has identified more than 1,000 cases in which it taxed pensions by mistake. It will have to refund an estimated £30 million.

Landfill worries

A report in *The Lancet* suggested that babies whose mothers live near landfill sites have a 40 per cent higher chance of being born with a chromosomal abnormality.

Scientists from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine examined children whose mothers lived near 23 hazardous waste landfill sites in Europe.

They found a higher chance of chromosomal conditions such as Down's Syndrome if the mothers lived within three kilometres of a site, compared to those living between three and seven kilometres away.



Marathon man: Jamie Cuthbertson, 40, of Glasgow became the first visually impaired person to compete in the annual 333 kilometre Sahara race late last year.

Direct action in Manchester

Disabled campaigners in Manchester have staged a three-day occupation of a housing office and threatened another protest if the council does not meet their demands.

A group of about 30 people from the Direct Action Network invaded the district housing office in January.

They claimed the city council had failed to solve a "crisis" in accessible housing and to find a safe, accessible home for disabled mum Clair Lewis.

Ms Lewis warned of another protest if the council does not address the situation.

A council spokesman said it had agreed to a "way forward" for Ms Lewis and said there was "no crisis" in accessible housing.

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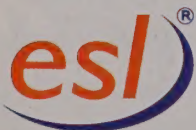
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Adapting homes by design

5-year failure

A local council has been criticised after failing to provide a support worker to a disabled boy for almost five years.

Shropshire County Council paid £1,500 in compensation after an investigation into the case by the Local Government Ombudsman following a complaint by the boy's father.

Between November 1996 and March 2001, the council told the boy's parents to get a private support worker, even though it had assessed him as needing such support, the ombudsman found.

The boy has hyperactivity, attention and coordination problems.

The ombudsman found the council had also failed to assess the parents' needs as carers.

As a result of the council's failure to make provision, his father claims he and his wife have had to give up work.

The council has apologised to the couple and provided a support worker. They have offered to assess the couple's needs as carers. They are also introducing an action plan which will go well beyond recommendations for improving services outlined in the ombudsman's report.

Needs in Leeds

Disability groups in Leeds are demanding action to improve taxi services.

The Access Committee for Leeds called a meeting to discuss the issue with the city council and taxi firms as *DN* went to press, after concerns about accessible taxis being unavailable or turning up late.

Tim McSharry, secretary to the Leeds Access Group, said: "We hope there can be some mechanism for sharing good practice."

The move comes after a row in December led to a group called City Cabs Association (CCA) dropping a contract to carry disabled people, which it held with a community inclusion scheme called Leeds Involvement Project (LIP).

Wheelchair user Geoffrey Brogden, 54, said he waited nearly two hours for an accessible cab after a LIP meeting.

But Javid Akhtar, chairman of CCA, said taxis never arrive this late, and that they withdrew after unfounded claims about driver attitudes.



Demolition men: Disabled residents from Sweetland Court, Dagenham, watched as their care home was knocked down in preparation for a new state of the art development.

Even more personal

The Scottish Executive has promised to consider extending free personal care to young disabled people.

From July, elderly people will be able to claim free personal care, but charities are worried that the needs of younger disabled people are being ignored.

Hugh Henry, Deputy Minister for Health and

Community Care, promised discussions to see how free personal care could be extended to young disabled people.

Kate Higgins, Policy & Parliamentary Manager at Capability Scotland, said: "We welcome this commitment to looking at the situation and would now call for a clear timetable to move this forward."

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Research gives heart

A new £5.4 million research centre has brought together four of Britain's top heart disease scientists to head a team of more than 120 researchers.

The new British Heart Foundation (BHF) Laboratories at University College London should help researchers funded by the charity to collaborate more closely.

Around 2.6 million people in the UK now have coronary heart disease (CHD), a major cause of disability and the

most common cause of death in the country.

Professor Sir Charles George, medical director of the BHF, which awards £50 million a year to heart research, said: "Our four, key researchers at UCL will be working side by side to take research back to basics and help piece together the jigsaw of the causes of cardiovascular disease."

The charity also launched a new computer programme which can estimate the risk of a

person having a heart attack.

The lifetime cardiovascular risk assessment programme can display the potential benefits of different treatments.

Meanwhile the BHF has published statistics showing the largest ever drop in deaths from CHD.

There were 124,037 deaths in 2000, a drop of 13,000 a year since 1998.

But the BHF said that this was due to better treatment and not healthier lifestyles.



World beater: Former deputy prime minister and one time heart patient Michael Heseltine (left), at the launch of the BHF Laboratories with Professor John Martin, a BHF chair.

HIV rise

The number of people diagnosed with HIV is continuing to rise, according to new figures.

So far, authorities are aware of more than 3,330 reports of new diagnoses of HIV during 2001, an increase of 17 per cent on 2000.

The figures from the Public Health Laboratory Service suggest that the number of people living with an HIV diagnosis may rise from about 23,000 in 2000 to almost 34,000 by 2005, an increase of 47 per cent.

Scans speed diagnosis

Brain scans can help produce a much earlier diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (ms), researchers have found, leading to hopes of improved treatments.

Researchers from the Institute of Neurology in London carried out MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans on 71 people with symptoms of the condition.

After an average follow-up of 14 years, 88 per cent of those people who had abnormal MRI results had developed ms, against 19 per cent of those whose MRI results were normal.

Nicola Russell, director of services for the MS Trust, said: "This study proves that MRI scans can accurately detect areas of damage within the brain and spine and this, together with other diagnostic procedures, may help to increase the speed of diagnosis for many people with ms.

"This will allow them to receive drugs at an earlier stage which will potentially increase their efficacy and could have far-reaching implications in terms of improving their quality of life."

Balanced learning

A charity has cautiously welcomed claims that a series of balance and co-ordination exercises can dramatically improve the learning ability of dyslexic children.

Researchers claim that three-quarters of those taking part in a study improved their reading, writing and spelling after six months on the Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Attention Disorder (DDAT) regime.

The programme uses a series of exercises, including throwing bean bags or balancing on balls.

It was developed at the DDAT centre in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, which offers private treatment.

DDAT is due to open a string of new centres at locations including Chelsea in London, Glasgow and Wales.

A spokesman for the British Dyslexia Association said: "Early signs seem to be interesting".

If successful, the programme could "complement, but not replace" existing educational provision for dyslexic children.

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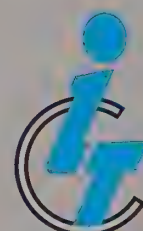
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Dartman: Tony aims for the bullseye

Haemophilia and arthritis haven't stopped Tony David from becoming an international darts champion. Rod Hermeston goes down under to hear his story

Tony David takes it well when I drag him away from his girlfriend to do an interview at 10.30pm Australian time.

The drawling voice at the end of the phone shows elation at his recent success.

Tony, who has haemophilia and arthritis, has just won the Embassy World Professional Darts Championship, beating the best players in the world.

He is the first Aussie to win the tournament in its 25-year history, and certainly the first disabled person.

"I'm still over the moon," he says. "I haven't come back down to earth. It is a very difficult tournament to have won."

It is only nine years since Tony, 34, from Townsville in Queensland, first stepped up to the oche.

And his success could not have been predicted. His parents were told that children with Tony's condition did not survive. His mother was open with him.

"She told me I would probably be in a wheelchair by the age of 12 and that I might not live beyond 17. I knew that from about age five."

As a child, he needed five operations on his knee to reduce internal bleeding in the joint. He needed 13 bags of blood and it left him with a limp. He cannot straighten one of his arms.

It was not long before new blood-clotting drugs came along to help. But life could still be unpleasant. He recalls kicking and screaming when given

injections during a hospital stay, and he eventually needed hypnotherapy to help him cope.

His childhood was tough for his parents too. His brother also has haemophilia, and there was a temptation for them to wrap the children in cotton wool. There were frequent hospital stays.

Despite the difficulties, he feels that having haemophilia

has shaped his personality. Strangely, he says: "To a certain extent, my blood disorder has made me what I am today. And it is probably a better me."

For instance, he was bullied at school but knew he could not retaliate. It taught him to find different strategies.

Tony is a bit unusual in the darts-playing world in other ways. He went to university

where he first did teacher training before converting to a Bachelor of Arts.

He admits that he didn't really want to go to university, and went on to work as a waiter in a casino.

Eventually he had to quit work and take a disability pension. It was while he was sitting about in a local club that three blokes asked him to make up the numbers in a darts match. He scored one hundred on his first try.

The other men thought he was pulling their legs when he said he had never played before. But they soon realised he didn't have a clue about the scoring and tactics. It was natural talent.

By 1996, he was number one in Australia.

And in January this year, he

for long periods of time. If I have a bleed in my right arm, I cannot throw the darts. I have to look after myself."

He's chuffed to bits with his achievement, which wowed the British audience.

But nothing can compare to the starry-eyed adulation that he gets from his five-year old son, Alexander, who has been practising darts since he was two-and-a-half. Tony couldn't get his trophy out of Alexander's hands when he brought it home.

"He's as proud as punch. He carried it about everywhere we went the other weekend. He said to me: 'When I'm big enough I'm going to win it, daddy.'"

His girlfriend Natalie, who he has been seeing since November 2000, is chuffed too, and is behind him 100 per cent. After all, she is woman's darts number one in Australia.

But victory has its own problems. While he has just heard that his disability pension will not be affected by his prize money, he is still

'To a certain extent my blood disorder has made me what I am today. And it is probably a better me.'

took the Embassy, beating Mervyn King of England 6-4.

The stats are impressive. Tony scored the highest number of 100-plus scores in the whole championship; 26 of them were 180s.

It earned him a £48,000 prize.

He had to prepare for the matches with regular injections.

"If I have a bleed in my right knee, I'm not able to stand up

waiting to see if the taxman is as generous. As it is, British taxes snapped up 20 per cent of his winnings.

But financial headaches aside, he doesn't have many complaints.

He will be back at the Embassy championships next year to defend his title.

And I certainly wouldn't bet against him.

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On the wrong arm of the law?

When Stephen Downing's murder conviction was quashed in January, the police's frequent failure to understand disabled people was highlighted again. But things may be changing, says John Pring

When Stephen Downing was arrested and questioned about the murder of office worker Wendy Sewell in 1974, he was interrogated by police officers for eight hours.

Downing had a learning difficulty, but the officers neither cautioned him nor allowed him access to a solicitor.

During those eight hours, Downing signed a confession, which he later retracted. He was subsequently convicted, and spent 27 years in prison, but always maintained his innocence. He finally had his murder conviction quashed in January this year.

Ironically, eight days later, Mencap praised ITV police drama *The Bill* for its "sensitive" handling of a storyline in which officers questioned a pregnant teenager with Down's Syndrome who they feared had been raped.

Richard Kramer, Mencap's head of campaigns, applauded the show's "excellent portrayal" of how police should handle the questioning

of witnesses and suspects with a learning disability.

But he also said: "Unfortunately, in reality, it is rare for people with a learning disability to be considered credible witnesses or treated with due sensitivity by the police."

So have the police improved the way they treat disabled people since 1974?

Margaret Kennedy, a trainer and consultant on disability and abuse, thinks the police have always believed that disabled people do not make credible witnesses.

"I think this has permeated into the psychology of police officers," she says.

She thinks specialist training is vital, particularly in interviewing technique.

Kathryn Stone, director of Voice UK, which helps people with learning disabilities who have been victims of crime, said her charity's experience of the police has been "mixed".

Some families have found the police "very sensitive, thoughtful, helpful and supportive". Others say the



Top of the bill: A recent episode of ITV's *The Bill* was praised for its "sensitive" handling of disability

police behaved in an "uncaring, unkind and unjust way".

The National Schizophrenia Fellowship (NSF) runs regular training sessions for police forces, and surveys of its members consistently give the police a higher satisfaction rating than social or health workers.

Paul Corry, media manager for the NSF, said: "The overwhelming response of our members is that the police do a very difficult job in very difficult circumstances and make a success of it most of the time."

He is particularly impressed with the willingness of senior Metropolitan Police (Met) officers to work more closely with the voluntary sector and

all too often be fatal and tragic."

Svenja Schaper, helpline manager for Respond, which provides counselling and

'It is rare for people with a learning disability to be considered credible witnesses or be treated with due sensitivity by the police'

mental health professionals.

But he adds: "The difficulty with the police's work with people with mental illness is that often it is in a crisis situation and when something does go wrong the results can

psychotherapy for people with learning disabilities who have been sexually abused, believes that "things have changed, but very slowly".

Police officers rarely receive the right awareness training, she says, and many learning disabled people still have "a fear of not being believed".

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) has been in discussions with the Met about improving deaf awareness, but because of the way the police are structured it has found it "very difficult" to introduce training in forces across the country.

Brian Lamb, the RNID's director of communications, said: "Frequently there is a shortage of sign language interpreters and lack of deaf awareness, resulting in confusion and serious distress." Alec Love, former head of a Met child protection team and now a child protection consultant, believes the police have improved and are doing "the best they can".

Part of this improvement, he says, is due to the government's No Secrets guidance, published in 2000, which provided codes of practice for local authorities, the health service and the police to work together to protect vulnerable adults from abuse.

And last September, the Association of Chief Police

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Officers (ACPO) produced guidelines on disability designed to help forces comply with the Disability Discrimination Act*.

They include sections on access and disability awareness and advice and information from disability charities.

Katherine Impey, equal opportunities officer for Lincolnshire police, who played a senior role in preparing the guidelines, said they were about building on progress already made.

She says: "I do not think the police have been dragging their heels. A lot of forces have been doing a lot of work."

She points to Leicestershire, Norfolk, Herefordshire, and Nottinghamshire forces, which have all devised schemes to help disabled people.

West Midlands has recently introduced a scheme which allows people with hearing impairments to send information to the police via a mobile telephone text messaging service.

The Met also seems to be taking improvement seriously. Its Diversity Directorate now treats crimes against vulnerable adults as hate crimes – alongside racism, homophobia and domestic violence – if the disability is the motive for the attack.

Detective Constable Tracey Hunt (above), who joined the directorate last year, wants to encourage more disabled people

to report crimes. "Disability doesn't mean inability to say what has happened to you," she says.

Offences against people with disabilities are greatly under-reported, and she is particularly concerned about crimes against disabled people by people who provide them with domiciliary and residential care.

She is developing a training package for fellow officers and wants disabled people to contact her with both good and bad experiences of her force.

A review of progress made in incorporating the ACPO guidance is due in September.

"Nobody's perfect," says Impey, "and nobody would say they were, but I think from the work we did on the guidelines that people are making strides in all the right directions. I think it is paying dividends."

But until comprehensive disability awareness training is introduced into every force in the country, the scenario outlined in *The Bill* is likely to remain more often fiction than fact.

** Providing a Quality Service to People with Disabilities and Older People is available free from the ACPO press office on 020 7227 3405/06*

Tracey Hunt can be contacted on 020 7230 4374 or at: tracey.hunt@met.police.uk Margaret Kennedy can be contacted at: mk@emkay-disab.demon.co.uk



Glenn Howard

Glenn Howard was sectioned under the Mental Health Act when he walked out of hospital.

The hospital asked the police to declare him a missing person and explained that he had probably gone home to feed his tropical fish.

Shortly after officers arrived at Howard's flat and tried to detain him, there was a scuffle.

At some point he collapsed and fell unconscious. He died on 1 January, 1999, after spending nearly 13 months in a coma. At the inquest, the jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and, against the coroner's advice, said his death was partly due to "excessive restraint".

The Police Complaints Authority recommended that four Metropolitan Police officers should face disciplinary

charges of neglect of duty and three more should receive advice from a senior officer about their conduct. The force has yet to hold the hearings.

In the wake of the case, the National Schizophrenia Fellowship urged police forces in the UK to improve mental health awareness training.

Chief executive Cliff Prior said: "There was no need for Mr Howard to die. It was an avoidable tragedy."

Ben Turner

Ben Turner is profoundly deaf and has a sight impairment and a learning disability. His mum, Sue, a vice-chair of the charity Sense, remembers a trip they took into town together when he was 17-years-old.

They had an argument in one of the shops and Ben disappeared. His mum reported him missing to the police.



Fortunately, one of her other sons soon found Ben at a nearby bus stop and brought him back to his mother and the police officer, who had so far been extremely helpful and polite.

Mrs Turner says: "Ben was still fairly stropky and signing. At which point, the policeman

said: "These people should not be let out on the streets. They should be locked up."

The incident happened 12 years ago, but she worries that something similar could happen again, and is worried how her son might react.

"I think he gets all these negative vibes from the police. I think if there was an incident, he would not co-operate with them and therefore make things much worse for himself."

Mary Butler

Seven years ago, Mary Butler (not her real name) told her mother that she had been sexually abused by staff at a residential home.

Mary, who has Down's Syndrome, was 15-years-old.

The initial investigation, by police and social services, was opened and closed in a matter of hours. It took persistent complaints by Mary's parents

over several years to force a second joint investigation, which found evidence that two members of staff who worked at the home may have sexually abused a number of children.

Mary has now been receiving counselling for 18 months and still suffers from vivid flashbacks.

Her father, a member of the charity Voice, which helps learning disabled victims of crime, says there were "years of

posturing" by the police before anyone took the case seriously.

He believes the case was dropped because officers knew it would be hard to secure a successful prosecution.

"Our experience when she first disclosed the abuse was nothing short of appalling," he says. "The police have to get the crime rate down. They have a shopping list of priorities, but where are our children on that list?"

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A second class refuge

Disabled asylum seekers and refugees are an under-represented and unknown group. Rod Hermeston reports on the struggle faced by those entering Britain to escape persecution and sometimes death

They are sometimes portrayed as invading hordes who just want to take British jobs and claim British benefits.

But asylum seekers and refugees frequently have harrowing tales to tell. For them, this country represents a haven from persecution and even death.

Yet many disabled asylum seekers see only the uncaring face of Britain.

Dr Keri Roberts, a research fellow at York University's Social Policy Research Unit, says: "There is no official source you can use to identify who disabled refugees are and how many there are. The data is just not there".

She has made estimates that range between 5,000 and 26,500. And she fears that the lack of information about disabled asylum seekers and refugees is being used as an excuse to avoid providing services.

As part of her ongoing research she has interviewed 39 disabled asylum seekers and has identified some of the problems they face.



Karzan Amin (left), 43, had both legs broken during torture before he fled Iraqi Kurdistan.

He was not able to see a doctor until three months after he arrived in Britain. When he was dispersed to Sunderland there were no friends to support him. He also fell foul of the voucher system.

"I could not travel around because I did not have a bus pass and I was supposed to walk around with my crutches to find which supermarkets took vouchers."

He has only been given exceptional leave to stay in the UK. That means he cannot bring his wife and children over. He now lives in London on the third floor of a hotel, with 100 stairs to climb, when as often happens, the lift breaks down.

Falah Mahmood (right), 25, also comes from Iraqi Kurdistan. He fled and came to Britain in 1999 after his family were poisoned and he was injured by bullets. When he arrived, an Essex GP would not register him or provide an interpreter.

He has exceptional leave to stay and now lives in Ilford renting a shared flat, but his mental health problems make this difficult.



The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) has been responsible since 2000 for asylum seekers who can show that they are destitute.

The government claims full account is taken of disabled asylum seekers' needs when they first enter the system.

They are put in emergency accommodation when first arriving in the UK and are then "dispersed" around the country while they await a

decision on their future.

Accommodation can be inappropriate. People with mobility impairments are sometimes put in second floor rooms which they have to share with strangers, says Roberts.

But if they turn down a place which NASS deems to be appropriate, support is withdrawn.

This can be a particular problem for some disabled people if they are sent to cities

where they don't have friends to provide care, says Roberts.

While local authorities have a duty to carry out community care assessments, many people are not told. When they are told, authorities can simply fob them off, she adds.

Alison Fenney, head of policy at the Refugee Council, says that there is a lack of clarity over who has responsibility for meeting the needs of disabled people.

If authorities decide, for instance, that a person needs to be rehoused, NASS says it will not pay for that. The Home Office argues this situation is unlikely to arise because appropriate housing is already provided.

Fenney says: "I think the best way of doing it is for NASS to contract with local authorities and pay them for housing costs and subsistence costs, while the authority should pay for any additional assistance costs."

Another problem is that unlike refugees who have been given permission to remain in Britain, asylum seekers cannot claim benefits including Disability Living Allowance.

And instead of receiving other benefits, asylum seekers are issued with vouchers to meet their living expenses. These can only be spent in certain shops.

That means that people with mobility problems who cannot apply for a free bus pass may be forced to trust people who they do not know to go out and spend their

vouchers, says Roberts.

The Home Office insists that the needs of disabled asylum seekers are taken into account at the outset.

A spokesperson claimed, for instance, that disabled asylum seekers are already placed in clusters of people from their own ethnic backgrounds who can support them. She says: "We work towards placing people together where there is some kind of support network for them."

But Fenney insists the system is not sensitive enough to meet the needs of disabled people. "I just don't think there has been any serious thought given to the needs of people with disabilities," she says.

"It needs much better liaison between NASS and local authorities. If local authorities cannot provide, then they need to consider where the communities are which might support a disabled person."

So what is being done to change the situation?

The government plans to phase out vouchers and to offer board and lodging in a network of accommodation centres. A white paper on this and other issues was due to be published as *DN* went to press.

Fenney welcomed the plans to scrap the voucher scheme but says that disabled asylum seekers are still not being given enough money.

It seems there is a long way to go before the needs of disabled asylum seekers will be met.








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No small Fiat

Vehicles that let a wheelchair user ride in front are few and far between. Last month, Conrad Hodgkinson and Christine Barton reviewed the Chrysler Entervan. Now they've discovered the Fiat Multipla – and it's cheaper

Disabled people are used to disappointment. How often have you visited a roadshow or dealership, convinced you will see some new piece of equipment or adaptation that will make a real difference to your life? And how often have you come away depressed and disappointed?

It has happened to us so often that Brotherwood's neat and practical conversion of the Fiat Multipla comes as something of a shock. Access to the front passenger position for almost any manual or power wheelchair, for less than £20,000? It sounds unreal.

To be fair, credit must go to Fiat for having the courage to produce the radical and innovative vehicle on which the adaptation is based. Compared

to my expectations, the Multipla looks distinctly odd with its high scuttle and chunky rear end – a bit like something out of *Wacky Races*.

The Multipla was designed to pack the maximum interior space into a body no larger than a family hatchback. In fact, rather like the Tardis, it appears bigger on the inside than the outside. The gearshift has moved to the dashboard and the handbrake is now on the right-hand side of the driver's seat, giving maximum interior space for passengers and luggage. It is to Brotherwood's credit that they spotted the potential in this layout and used it to excellent effect with their "side-by-side" conversion.

The Multipla is slightly wider than a standard saloon car, allowing Brotherwood engineers to remove four of the original six seats on the passenger side and

lower the floor right up to the passenger footwell. Wheelchair access is through the rear door. A short, simple, fold-down ramp allows a wheelchair to be pushed or driven into the vehicle.

However, what makes the conversion unique for a vehicle of this size is that the wheelchair passenger sits in the front beside the driver with plenty of headroom (56in) and an unobstructed view through the windscreen. How long have we waited for this?

So what is the Multipla like to live with? My partner Christine and I had the opportunity to try the vehicle on several occasions.

Christine uses three different wheelchairs depending on where she is going: a manual, a rear drive Twister and a big Invacare GS24 Pro power chair with a Recaro seat for outdoor work and travelling long distances.

Using the ramp was no problem with any of the chairs. Brotherwood have maximised the width of the lowered floor area, achieving a remarkable 31in. Avoiding the rear suspension required a slight dogleg, which can make reversing out of the vehicle in a



From back to front: Christine uses the ramp with ease

power chair slightly fiddly. While it was possible to use all three of Christine's chairs in the Multipla without major problems, turning the large front castors on the Invacare was a tight squeeze.

The Multipla comes with two levels of trim and two different engine options – a 1.6 16 valve petrol unit and a 1.9 direct injection diesel. The basic SX version (described here) comes with ABS, three airbags, central locking, a sophisticated trip computer and electric height-adjustable driving seat. The ELX version adds alloys, climate control and double electric sunroofs. Prices with conversion range from £19,987

for the SX 1.6 petrol to £22,455 for an ELX diesel 1.9. The Multipla is available on the Motability scheme.

On the road, the Multipla is nippy and manoeuvrable, although engine noise can be obtrusive at higher revs. Visibility is excellent for both driver and passenger, which may be a shock to wheelchair passengers used to seeing the back of someone's head.

The gearchange is short and precise, although the position of the lever on the dashboard and forward of the steering wheel takes some getting used to.

So what are the disadvantages? In relation to the conversion itself, very few. The adaptations are creatively planned and executed to a high standard. And there are some neat touches, like retracting front wheelchair restraints that can be drawn out and fixed before entering the vehicle.

The main question relates to overall size – even the Tardis has its limits. Once the wheelchair passenger is on board, there is only one other passenger seat, although an additional folding seat will be available shortly. Our problem would be the amount of equipment we need to take with us when we go away overnight. However, Brotherwood are keen to make individual adjustments where practical, such as providing a mounting point to secure a folded manual wheelchair.

Unfortunately, Fiat do not offer, and have no plans to offer, an automatic option.

But if space is not a problem and you are looking for a wheelchair accessible vehicle at around £20,000 with the option of sitting up front, it will take a lot to beat this Multipla. Brotherwood Automobility tel: 01935 872603 e-mail: sales@brotherwood.com



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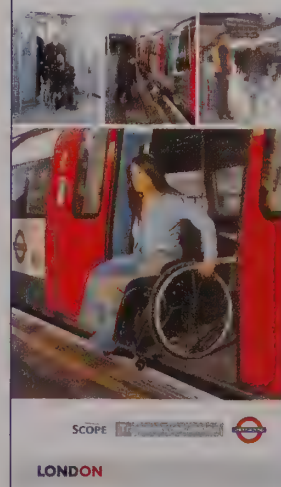
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New year, same deal

Last year, Douglas Campbell slammed the service at petrol stations. One year on, he's having to do it again



It is a year since I last looked at the problems of disabled drivers and petrol stations. Long enough, you would think, for the operators of petrol stations to get their act together to ensure that they meet the needs of people like myself, as well as comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Our needs are straightforward. We need assistance to fill up with petrol or diesel and in taking payment to the till. Even if another customer will do the filling up part, you can hardly give them your credit card to go to the cashier!

The bad news is that the big oil companies that still control a huge share of the petrol stations do not seem to care what happens when a disabled driver pulls in. Their attitude

displayed my fluorescent yellow "HELP" sign, which shows the wheelchair symbol. At this, the cashier announced that she was alone and could not assist.

I was in a dilemma. The warning light for my petrol tank was shining brightly, as I had used a lot of petrol coming down from Manchester. I knew it would be unwise to drive too far without fuel and I did not know of other garages in the area. And it was possible they too would be unhelpful.

I drove up to the shop door and eventually was able to speak to the cashier, who repeated what she had already publicly announced and was unable to suggest an alternative petrol station. She claimed her manager had gone to the post office. I insisted she contacted

'Perhaps the companies concerned would listen to us if we urged other motorists to boycott their petrol stations. Have they forgotten that disabled people spend over £1.25 billion on road fuel every year?'

appears to be totally arrogant and solely concerned with their profits.

Only a couple of days ago, I drove into the Shell petrol station on the A5 trunk road at Cannock in Staffordshire. It was lunchtime on a Friday and the adjacent roundabout was busy; so was the petrol station. As I pulled up to the pump, I was pleased to see a service call receiver in the window next to the cashier. I set this off four or five times, but the cashier ignored it each time. I then sounded my horn and

her employers and seek advice and she then came back to say that she would assist me as soon as the site was quieter. I had no choice but to wait a further 15 minutes until she could assist me.

You might think this was an unfortunate incident and that Shell would be keen to apologise and explain what went wrong. Soon after leaving the petrol station I telephoned their customer services and asked that a senior manager contact me on Monday. On Wednesday I did receive a call

from Shell apologising and trying to explain the problem. I was given no answer as to what I should do in future, nor any confidence that it won't happen again.

In case you think this problem is unique to Shell, it isn't. On a weekday afternoon in December, I was driving between Oxford and Swindon. I drove into the BP petrol station near Farringdon. The story was almost exactly the same as at the Cannock Shell. BP, once the pride of Great Britain, also no longer seems to care.

Is it time that we sought the support of other motorists in our campaign for these oil companies to meet our needs? I feel sure that most motorists would be horrified if they knew the problems these companies are causing to disabled drivers. Perhaps the companies concerned would listen if we urged other motorists to boycott their petrol stations for a week. Have they forgotten that disabled people in the UK spend over £1.25 billion on road fuel every year?

DN will be contacting the oil companies. They have until the next issue to respond with an answer to these points.

Meanwhile, some companies do care. I wrote about the commitment of Welcome Break to meet the needs of disabled drivers at their petrol stations. Last week, I called in at their site near Leicester. The service call worked and the cashier promptly dispatched the duty manager to assist me. Not only did he happily fill my tank, he also fetched some mints for the journey north.

Not all petrol stations are controlled by big companies. Over 6,000 are independently operated. These make up over 50 per cent of the garages in the country and are often in rural areas. They may also be the village shop and even the post office. Nearly 3,000 of them have started to work together for mutual support under the "Garage Watch" name.

One Garage Watch initiative will introduce the "Happy 2 Help" scheme. Soon, posters will appear at those garages that help disabled and elderly drivers with refuelling. Clearly these businesses recognise that it makes good business sense to offer help. On launch day, they hope to have



500 sites signed up.

Remember that the big oil companies that ignore our needs are often the same ones who charge smaller garages more for their bulk supplies,

making their petrol the odd penny dearer than the big sites. DN would like to hear from readers who have had the same kind of experiences. Address/ e-mail address on page 2.

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'I said I would go to the press'

When Gerald McCarthy withdrew his son from special school, he hadn't anticipated the fight he would have to ensure Paul received the support he needed

Our son Paul started school in a local nursery. Although he was bright, he needed more physical care than they could provide, so they arranged for my wife and me to meet the head of the nearby special school, Brookfield House, at Woodford Green, Essex.

We were worried that once he was in special school, Paul might never return to mainstream education, but we were reassured when the head promised that Paul's placement would be reviewed regularly.

So it was, but the school always seemed to focus on Paul's physical needs, largely ignoring his social and intellectual development. When we tried to discuss this with the head, we were met with generalisations. Paul's needs were skirted around and he never seemed to be involved in the reviews.

We were told in glowing terms of Paul's progress. He was well liked and got on with teachers and support staff. He was the star of the school play



and would do well in his GCSEs; he might even make three grade Cs. Sadly, it was unlikely that the school would be able to offer him 'A' level courses.

By the time Paul was ten, we had grown increasingly uncomfortable with his schooling. He had no peer group and could only relate to staff. We knew community services were developing to support children like Paul in mainstream education, but the school wouldn't agree to his return there.

One day, Paul's teacher was absent and was replaced by a supply teacher who had recently retired from special

needs education in a neighbouring borough where integration was the norm. She saw us privately and was quite direct. "Paul shouldn't be here," she said. "You should take him away. Insist on a mainstream place for him."

The head was most uncooperative and insisted Paul would fail in a mainstream school. We persisted, and arranged a place in a local junior school, which our other children had attended. Fortunately, it was generally accessible and the staff included some family friends. But we were worried they mightn't understand Paul's needs, making life more difficult.

When he started there, it was obvious Paul was a long way behind in the three Rs, but he caught up quickly. However, the local education authority, Waltham Forest, seemed unable to organise the support Paul needed.

The assistant director of education, responsible for special needs, refused to answer letters, was unavailable on the



Here we go again: Paul (above) continues the fight for support at university that his dad Gerald (above left) began

phone and never returned calls, even to the head teacher. Although the school found volunteers to enable Paul, they were frustrated by the lack of cooperation from the borough. When he transferred to the local comprehensive, things got worse.

In the end, I wrote to the chair of the education committee explaining our problems and ending with my trump card: I was a party activist, a long standing member of the local bench, treasurer of my local Scope group and a senior local government officer with contacts in high places. I had tried every reasonable avenue and failed to make progress. If the chair couldn't do anything I would go to the press. I felt incredibly uncomfortable about using my position in this way, but there seemed to be no other option.

The reaction was truly amazing. The invisible assistant director was waiting on our doorstep when I arrived home the next evening – incredibly helpful, even ingratiating.

We made progress, not as much or as fast as we would have liked, but it was much better than before.

Over the years, we could never let up in our struggle to get the support Paul needed in mainstream education, yet he stayed and thrived. He made friends; children we'd never

seen before came knocking to see if he could go out to play and he did. They set up a local football team which he could take part in. He had to be rescued several times, when his buggy turned over in the woods. He became part of the local community, not just some odd kid who got on a council bus every morning and disappeared.

Was it all worth it? Paul picked up seven GCSEs at grade C and above. After collecting three 'A' levels, he went to university and was awarded a first in Economics, winning the Course Tutors' Prize. Last year he completed an MA in International Relations at Nottingham University and now he's working on a PhD in European Enlargement at Leeds, with the possibility of lecturing at his college later this year.

Paul loves the academic life, and there's no doubt that he's master of his own destiny. He goes to pubs and clubs, shops and football matches.

I often wonder what he'd be doing now if the head of Brookfield House had had his way; sitting at home, with visits to Chingford skill centre, perhaps? Oops, no: Waltham Forest is trying to shut that down now, so perhaps just sitting at home. Of course it was worth it. Gerald McCarthy is chair of the charity Scope.

'The struggle doesn't end at school'

Paul McCarthy comments:

"The events described by my father will come as no surprise to people who understand the workings of local education authorities. However, I would like to sincerely thank the workers, voluntary or at best underpaid, for their unstinting help.

The struggle for assistance needed to facilitate academic work does not end at school. While academic staff have been universally

supportive, I have yet to find a university that provides an adequate level of academic and social support.

They either provide none at all, or only on the basis that all disabled students conform to the same stereotypical standards – for example, housing disabled students in accommodation more familiar to the institutions my parents helped me escape from than to the 21st century.

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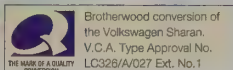
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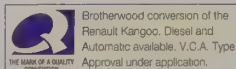
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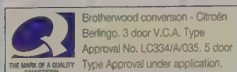
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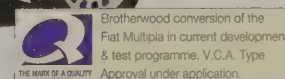
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ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

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Motability: profit and choice

The claim that Motability Finance only makes 0.85 per cent interest on Motability cars (DN October) is nonsense. Their annual percentage rate on used cars can be over 35 per cent.

Motability is a charity and in its constitution there is nothing to stop it using other finance companies to finance vehicles, yet it always uses Motability Finance Ltd (MFL). Why, when there are other finance companies who could do it cheaper?

MFL is not a charity; it is a consortium of five large banks. Handing over the business to them "lock, stock and barrel" can, in my opinion, only mean a worse deal for disabled motorists, especially those like

myself who need larger vehicles to carry power wheelchairs, which require large deposits.

I have just put down a £5,500 deposit on a Honda CRV on contract hire. For the next three years MFL will get my higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, currently £38.65, with two increases in 2002 and 2003. That roughly adds up to £11,500. The Honda CRV Auto I have leased only costs around £18,500.

In three years' time, the vehicle goes back to MFL, who will sell it for at least £11,000.

So MFL are getting £22,500 for an £18,500 vehicle – not an 0.85 per cent profit.

Jim Allison (email)

My Motability lease starts and ends at an exact time and date, so unless I am willing to be without a car, hoping a particular model will come down in price, I am limited to what is available on changeover day.

When I was due to change my car last time (I wanted a VW Polo), I had a nil deposit. But by the time the paperwork came back from Motability I was told there was a £750 deposit.

Both myself and my wife are disabled and we could not afford an initial payment for any car. We were lucky the new dealer worked really hard to get one quickly, but we were still left without a vehicle for a week.

Michael Bayliss
East Lulworth, Dorset

Visiting the City of London? Get a dispensation

While having an argument about a parking ticket in the City of London, I found out that although orange/blue badges cannot be used, you can

ring the Corporation of London (tel: 020 7332 3553/4) and ask for a dispensation certificate which can be displayed with your badge for one day

only and entitles you to park in the City of London. If they can do it, why not others?

Peter Budgen MID, MIMIS
Barming, Kent

Not sociABLE in Cornwall

In July 2001 I was excited to receive a grant from the Millennium Awards for £4,744. I started a project that I called sociABLE, to organise events for those with a physical disability.

The first event, in September at Truro Bowl, was supported by 30 people at £6 a head, and everyone seemed to have a good time. Able-bodied friends and colleagues also attended so there was a good mix.

My second event in November was to be at a hotel in St Austell. A comedienne, live band, buffet meal and free transport from all over Cornwall – all for £8 each.

Why, then, was there so little support? My small committee – three of the five of us were disabled – worked hard. After selling only nine tickets and with a week to go, I cancelled the evening.

I spent a long time considering the pros and cons and made the tough decision to return the funding and abandon the project.

Perhaps it is a myth that disabled people want the same as able-bodied people? Maybe they are just happy with their lot. I am very sorry that when those living in Cornwall had the opportunity to have some fun, they did not seize the moment.

I'm 23 and have a disability myself. I thought I would be able to offer fun and good company at social events which I find are so important for my self-esteem.

Lee Freeman
St Austell

Ripped off?

About six months ago I sent a cheque off to an advertiser in DN for a pair of special shoes. Despite many calls each resulting in a good excuse and promise of immediate delivery, my order has not been delivered but my cheque has long since cleared.

The advertisers are Betterfit Comfort Footware of Swadlingcote, Derbyshire. Has anyone else had difficulties with this firm or am I just unlucky?

Trevor L Kent
Gerrards Cross, Bucks
We know of two other readers. Are there more? – Editor

Asperger ignored

I was overjoyed to see the autism features in January DN.

The outcome of psychiatrists and GPs not being trained in Asperger is that parents are not supported at all, leaving people with autism out in the cold.

People with Asperger face barriers in trying to claim Disability Living Allowance and parents face financial hardship as well as difficulties in every area of officialdom.

The long term consequences are evident in seeing persons with Asperger incorrectly diagnosed in psychiatric hospitals and plied with unsuitable medication, which in turn leaves them with a further long term disabling condition.

Maureen Erdwin
Three Mile Cross, Berkshire

PC pulse

by Dan Batten

Bone idol

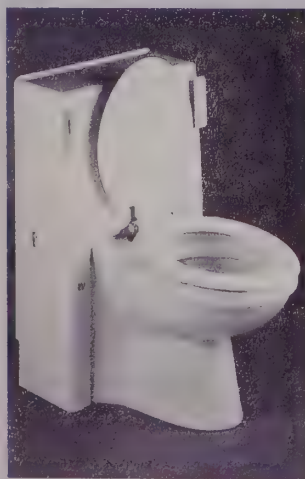
ITV's *Pop idol* runner-up Gareth Gates was picked on by *Daily Express* columnist Charlie Catchpole because of his stammer. Catchpole claimed that the 17-year old had scored millions of votes from viewers of the show "because they felt sorry for him". He went on to joke that if Gareth had won and made an acceptance speech, "News at Ten would have to be moved to midnight".

Even if Gareth did need more time to speak, it would be worth it to hear genuine joy rather than the tired gags of a lazy hack from a paper that backs the EASE access awards.



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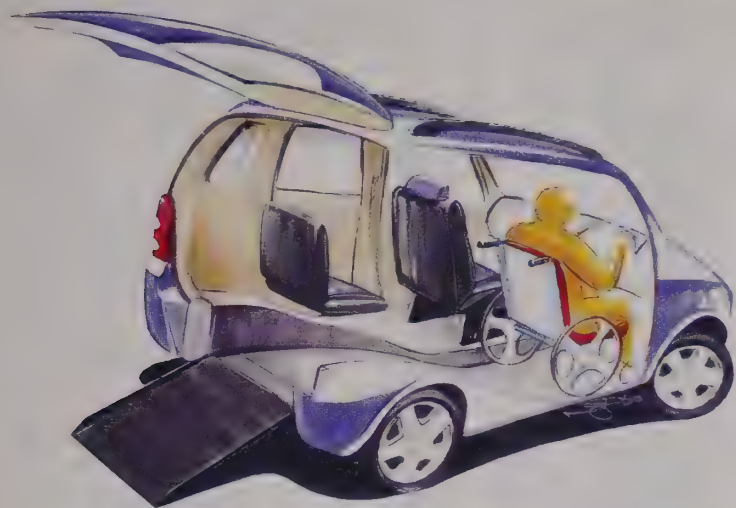
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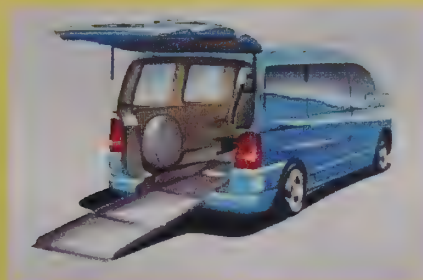


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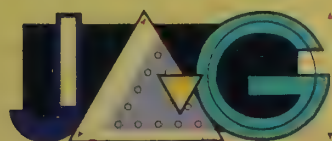
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There's no better way to beat the winter blues than taking a short Easter break. *DN* highlights three of the best...

Venice

Keith Jansz is impressed by the 'great attitude' in magical Venice

Venice does not seem the most likely destination for a wheelchair user, but for an artist it is the ultimate inspiration, a city that has been immortalised by the world's greatest artists – I had to go!

We travelled from the airport by adapted taxi as our hotel, the Santa Chiara, was at the end of the causeway linking Venice to the mainland. A more stylish and expensive option would have been an adapted water taxi, straight from the airport.

The Santa Chiara has excellent facilities, including a wheel-in shower big enough to throw a party in. But being on the outskirts meant that we needed to catch a vaporetti, or water bus, to get around.

It was no great hardship, travelling up and down the Grand Canal. The vaporetti are easy to get on and off, with plenty of willing hands to help, although this would be much harder had I travelled in my power chair. Depending on our destination, we selected which number "bus" we should catch and where to

disembark, our principal objective being to avoid the bridges which traverse the hundreds of canals. Whilst not impossible, the bridges were very hard work for my wife and our friend, Jani, to cope with, but we found locals and tourists alike offered help when they saw us struggle.

Venice itself is magical. Sitting at a canal side restaurant or at a café in one of the many squares, just watching the world go by, was one of my greatest pleasures. In a city where locals are outnumbered by tourists we enjoyed playing "guess the nationality" – why are we Brits always so badly dressed? It was great to see the familiar buildings for real and, inside, the churches, palace, museums and art galleries are magnificent, with a surprising effort being made to allow wheelchair access. On a couple of occasions I was installed, chair and all, in a weird contraption which proceeded to climb upstairs – nerve-racking, but it worked.

Since we were staying in Venice for eight days, we also decided to travel further



On a roll: Access in Venice is surprisingly good.

afield. One day we took the train to nearby Padua. Apparently, we should have organised my travel the day before but were permitted to travel anyway, just needing to specify our return train time in order to ensure that the appropriate staff were there to assist. The Italian rail system is a bit complicated but very cheap, and the train we used had great disabled loos.

Another day we took a ferry ride to the island of Murano, home of the Venetian glass industry for hundreds of years, and Burano. The tiny island of Burano is known for its brightly coloured houses. It was of particular interest to me as it was a favourite holiday haunt of Erich Stegman, the founder of the Mouth & Foot Painting Artists for whom I paint.

We had a lovely, leisurely lunch on Burano, next to a quietly lapping canal.

Our trip to Venice was fantastic, and made especially enjoyable because of the great attitude of the Italians towards disabled people – helpful, polite and often even affectionate.

Venice itself is a mixture of sea air, faded grandeur and fantastic light, with a unique atmosphere. It can be expensive, but by avoiding the main tourist areas we found great, reasonably priced places to eat, and a weeks' pass for the vaporetti was very good value.

On our final day we decided to blow the last of our lire at one of the outrageously priced cafés in the Piazza San Marco. We sat in the square, sipping our Bellini cocktails, being serenaded by the café's string quartet, planning how soon we could return.

INFORMATION

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Jersey



As a holiday destination we found that Jersey was enjoyable and accessible for everyone, including disabled holiday-makers like ourselves.

My husband, Donald, and I stayed at the Hotel Maison de Landes near St Ouens Bay. It is a hotel that caters specifically

for people with varying levels of disability. We found the staff to be exceptionally helpful and the meals served in the hotel were of a very high quality.

Car hire was easy (even though I needed an automatic) and it can be an inexpensive way of seeing the island if you

drive a manual geared car.

Jersey is a small island, around nine miles long, with scenic roads and breath-taking coastal viewpoints. The coastline varies from long crescent bays of clean sand to rugged cliffs and stony outcrops where large white-topped waves crash constantly

Dublin

Chris Hoban discovers that a weekend in Dublin just isn't long enough

I walk with one or two crutches depending on how my problem knee feels.

Dublin has a large spread out airport and anyone with walking difficulties definitely needs to book wheelchair assistance to avoid exhaustion.

I flew out with my husband on the midday flight in a small 15 seater plane and was delighted to see the sun sparkling over Morecambe Bay and the Irish Sea.

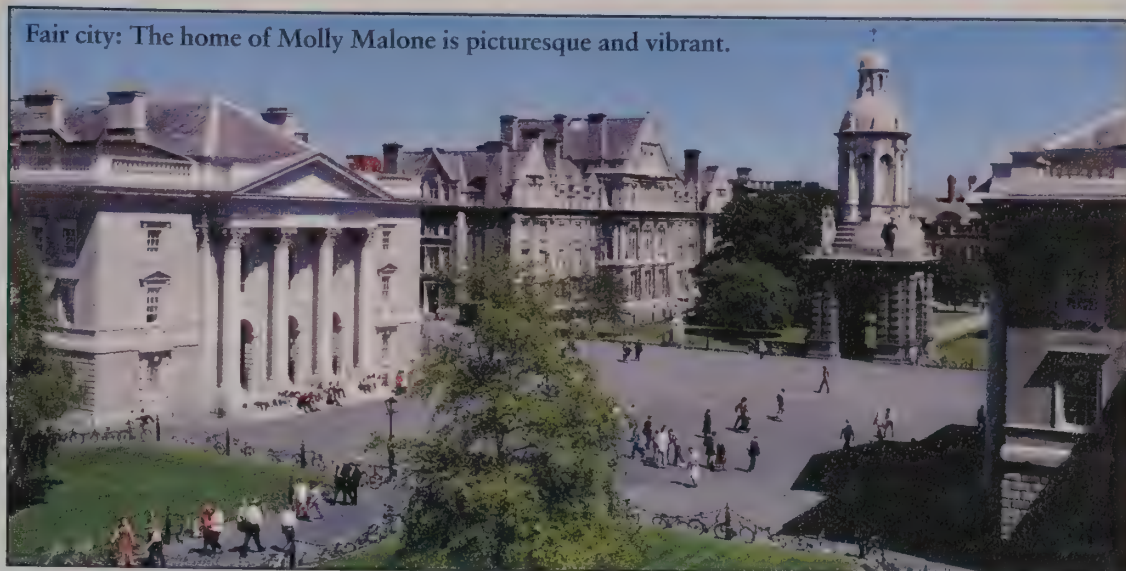
At Dublin the airport wheelchair assistant whisked us away from the baggage carousel loaded with our cases. He sped away over the road to a waiting airport shuttle bus. There the driver lowered the coach so that I only had a few steps to negotiate and we were off. The driver was a mine of information and told us not to rely on taxis being available,

especially at night when they are few and far between.

Our hotel was close to the Lansdowne Road rugby stadium. It was Victorian and pleasantly furnished with antiques that were in keeping with the high ceilings and spacious rooms. Our room was on the same level as the dining room.

Although we knew when we'd booked that there was no lift in the hotel, we hadn't been told that there was a long flight of steps from the street up to reception. If I'd known, I might not have chosen the hotel. My advice is that if you're planning to stay in any of the Lansdowne Road hotels and you have mobility needs, check accessibility levels with the hotel first.

The full day we had in Dublin was awash with sunlight so we opted to take a City Tour open top bus. This was



Fair city: The home of Molly Malone is picturesque and vibrant.

good fun. The tour guides added their own stories to the commentary and the Irish humour kept me chuckling all the time we were away.

The tour was extensive, giving us a good idea of the layout of the city and we were able to get fantastic views of the magnificent Georgian buildings with their iron balconies.

Molly Malone's statue is prominent in the city centre. Everyone will remember the song about her, but the lyrics don't mention that she had a second job at night. She was, apparently, rather ill dressed for the normally wet Dublin climate, with her plunging neckline, and the locals remember her as: "The tart with the cart".

The tourist information centre is built into an old church and is the place to arm yourself with leaflets. There are pews from the original church to sit down in, which was essential for me. There are illuminated information screens and there is a lift-accessible café upstairs.

Downstairs there are good quality Irish products and postcards sold at realistic prices. I bought a silver Celtic cross to remind me of my visit. This was my one-stop-shop for the holiday.

You can go by bus to Phoenix Park and the zoo, quite a way outside the city centre. The bus passes the Prime Minister's residence where you can see the gas light which burns at all times to welcome home immigrants and welcome tourists to the city.

We returned to the city in the evening after a rest at our hotel, intending to visit an Irish pub, to see traditional dancing and drink some Guinness. But the weather was far too good to sit in a crowded pub, so we strolled down the River Liffey watching the sun go down over its many bridges.

We will have to return to visit all the sights we missed. I would like to see "Dublina", a look back at life in mediaeval times, and the National Gallery.

At the airport the next day

we were surprised to be met at the boarding gate by a fire services ambulance. I thought they must be short of vehicles, but on opening the doors, I saw why we needed the qualified helpers to escort me onto the plane. We were to travel back on an old six seater!

I managed to get myself up to the cabin of the plane and screw myself into the back luxury leather seat maintaining my dignity because I was wearing trousers, but a young teenager in a skimpy skirt was less fortunate!

All through the trip, people were very kind and I cannot wait to go to Dublin again.

INFORMATION

Chris stayed in a B & B on the outskirts of the city and paid £60 per person per night. Details of accommodation in Dublin with maps and virtual tours can be found at www.visitdublin.com Further details from the Irish tourist board, tel: 0207 493 3201.



The most scenic of the Channel Islands makes a good base for exploration, says Margaret Lees



— great for photographers.

Jersey has many interesting tourist attractions. Particularly worth a visit is the lavender farm, which opens mid May, and the Bouchet Agateware Pottery in St Ouens village — the only agate pottery producer in the world. If you want to spend,

the Jersey woollen mill is a shopper's delight and you can browse for hours in St Helier.

A popular day trip is to San Malo in France. The ferry leaves from St Helier and the journey was straight-forward. The ship was walk on (or wheel on, in my case) and there were lifts to the seating area where there was a duty free shop and a place to buy snacks. The journey took an hour and a half, giving us six hours to explore San Malo.

San Malo is a beautiful old walled town with narrow cobbled streets, some of which are steep and would be hard work for those pushing wheelchairs. The quality of food both in San Malo and Jersey was high — and relatively cheap, with main courses costing around £6.

In general, we found Jersey to be disabled-friendly and we would definitely spend another holiday there.

INFORMATION

The Maison des Landes Hotel is purpose built for disabled guests, their families and helpers. It can provide specialist equipment, including hoists, electric beds, wheelchairs and commodes. Rooms cost between £36 and £45 per person per night. For more information tel:

01534 481683 or email: maisonlandes@localdial.com



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The cream of the travel crop

You know you want a break, and you've pencilled in a week away. But where do you go and what packages are available? Dan Batten serves up another tasty selection of travel treats

If you're travelling to foreign climes with Virgin Holidays, why not take advantage of some of the special services they offer to disabled holidaymakers? These include assistance at the airport, early boarding and tactile safety demonstrations. They also provide Braille safety demonstration cards for visually impaired people and supply a range of medical equipment for use at your destination. To make the long flight less tiresome, you can watch a film with closed captions on a TV watchman using a loop system, or you can peruse the Braille

duty-free magazine.
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If you fancy seeing big game animals in South Africa, taking a two week cruise around the northern capitals of Europe or sampling the delights of the Devon countryside, then let Chalfont Line be your guide. They offer a variety of care packages, from basic assistance to an exclusive option which gives you one to one care throughout your holiday. There's also good news for electric wheelchair users, as Chalfont's Millennium coach



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Address

Postcode Tel No

Age ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Wheelchair user ☐ Ambulant ☐

Helper needed - YES/NO

Please advise what help would be required

Wheelchair accessible hotel room required Yes ☐ No ☐

Loan of fly fishing tackle Yes ☐ No ☐

Other facilities needed

Please tick the correct answer to the question below:

When the female salmon moves into the river, she makes her way to the spawning grounds where she builds a nest to lay her eggs in.

How many eggs does the female salmon lay?

About 2000 ☐ about 5000 ☐ about 10000 ☐

Entry to the Clos-o-Mat competition is free to all disabled persons. There is no monetary value connected to this prize and no correspondence will be entered into. The prize is not transferable. Clos-o-Mat will draw the winning entries at their headquarters. All winners will be notified by phone or post.

FINAL ENTRY DATE 6 MAY 2002

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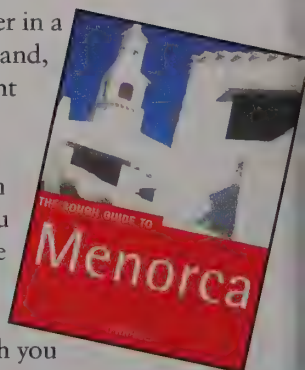
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If you are taking a holiday in Britain or Ireland, the RADAR guide to *Holidays in Britain & Ireland* could help. It has detailed information on over 1,300 places to stay, including guest houses, self-catering accommodation and centres where specialist service and care is provided. The guide also includes information on advice services, voluntary and commercial organisations and transport.
£8, Tel: 020 7250 3222 or visit www.radar.org.uk

Holiday Care can help sort out problems you may encounter when planning your holiday. They provide information on holidays at home and overseas and about everything else you can possibly think of, including reserving accessible accommodation, guides to holiday funding and, for the more adventurous, finding adventure holidays.
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If you are a stranger in a strange land, you might rightly wonder where on earth you are. Take a rough guide map with you

and you'll be able to find your way anywhere from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam to the Eiffel tower in Paris. If you're not *au fait* with the local lingo, a rough guide phrase book could be helpful, and stop you ordering snails when all you wanted was a plain old ham and mustard sandwich. Available from all good bookshops or visit www.roughguides.com



To Helsinki and Hamburg

When you live in Harwich, the continent is virtually next door. Jenni Meredith took the opportunity to pay a visit to Finland and Germany, and tells *DN* readers what she found

TONY MEREDITH



Life's a beach: Jenni assesses the wicker furnishings in Travemunde

Living in Harwich puts me in striking distance of both Stansted airport, with flights to most of Europe, and the DFDS ferries to Cruikshaven, near Hamburg. It didn't take me long to try out the routes.

My husband and I flew Buzz to Helsinki and took a taxi to the Grand Marina Hotel. Helsinki is clean and sedate, although Finns find it busy. Twenty per cent of Finland's population lives there. Then again, only 5 million people live in Finland.

Everywhere you turn, you find water. On the city outskirts is a large parkland which we explored before taking the bus back to the centre, which boasts the Kiasma Gallery. We explored

their contemporary art collection, much of which can be viewed on interactive computer terminals.

Eating out in Helsinki is relaxing. Most restaurants are spacious, with ample room between tables. Food is much the same price as in England. While I didn't go for much of the richer Finnish dishes, I found plenty of tasty snacks and starters.

Finnish design was all around, with shops offering designer chairs and classic 50s lamps. The quayside market bustled with colourful crafts, woven scarves, felt hats, knitted jumpers, jewellery, carved animals, and hand-made pots. A covered market behind large wooden doors offered cheese, olives, pickled mushrooms,

dried and smoked fish and international wines.

At the National Art Museum, I managed to catch some of the Disability Film Festival and admire the collections of Impressionist

and 20th century art.

We travelled on to Rostock, where we found people preparing for a street festival.

On Saturday, the town centre swarmed with a well-behaved crowd. A 70s-style band boomed music from amplifiers outside the library, while folk dancers and a brass band entertained at the other end of the street.

Favourite festival fare is baked potatoes and endless varieties of sausage cooked on giant suspended woks.

Even if it is just to sample a different pace of life, Rostock is worth a visit. The town centre has a gothic university and ornate church that houses an intricate astronomical clock. Tall ships berthed along the quay are a short walk away.

By the moorings, we found a circus project with residential caravans offering workshops for disabled people.

We managed a brief visit to Germany's famous seaside resort of Warnemunde, then travelled an hour along the coast to Lubeck.

Lubeck has berths for tall ships, their furled sails reflected in the river. It also has a Baltic coast resort, Travemunde, where we took the bus to see the deserted beach set with a grid of wicker bathing shelters. From here, you can take ferries to Scandinavia.

We came upon a weekend street festival, with potato ovens and sausages. A bit like Rostock, but without pop

groups or dancers. It was more of a village fete.

Lubeck's Puppet Museum, in a cobbled back street, has an impressive private collection that spans several centuries. It has marionettes from Java, Asia and Europe. The art gallery hosts a young Italian artists' exhibition and the gallery garden was a welcome respite from the traffic noise. Thomas Mann's house is also a big attraction.

But Lubeck is mainly a place to enjoy river walks and admire the boats. If it is art collections or large shops you want, you really need a city like Hamburg, our last stop before taking the ferry home.

Hamburg is a city of canals and bridges, monorail metro and great galleries and museums. They still remember the Beatles: their faces look out from all bookshop windows.

Again, we hit a street festival, the bit fest. Stall upon stall of tourist brochures about every English town, except for Harwich.

I'd like to travel back to Hamburg to revisit the Art Nouveau and musical instrument collections at the Arts and Crafts Museum. But we were able to catch an exhibition of Russian porcelain there before our ferry left.

Further details of all these places and more are on the web at www.lonelyplanet.com. DFDS operate ferries around Europe, tel: 08705 333 000, www.dfdsseaways.co.uk



Take me to the river: tall ships in Lubeck

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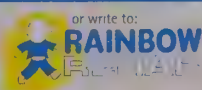
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n o n s e n s e v e h i c l e c o n v e r s i o n s

This month, *DN* begins its Legal Eagle series, putting you in touch with a solicitor who can offer informed advice

Divorced from your assets



DN reader Helen Reed writes:

I have been tetraplegic since a road accident in 1990, and received compensation.

Last year, I had to pay my ex husband £28,000 after our divorce, as he took me to court for a lump sum. Despite a 30-page report from an occupational therapist clearly showing that I would need funds to pay for my care, the judge at the hearing obviously wasn't convinced.

I have heard of other similar cases. The time and effort it takes to get compensation is bad enough, but fighting to keep it is very difficult. I also have two children to bring up. I don't get maintenance from my ex for the children. I have a part-time job; and when my savings run dry, I will have to sell my house and buy something cheaper. I want to do something about this, but don't know where to start.

Solicitor Katy Rensten replies:

It must seem very unfair to you that the Court took your accident compensation into account. Unfortunately, under the present law, the court is entitled to take into account all the assets of a couple, no matter what the source. The money belongs to one or both of the couple and so counts as a "matrimonial asset".

The Court's job is to consider all the assets in the "pot" and to divide these as fairly as possible. When there is barely enough to go around, this can be extremely difficult and often, neither person gets as much as they had hoped.

The Judge has to look at a number of factors; these include the needs of the husband, the wife and any children. These factors are all set out in Section 25 of The Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, which is the main relevant piece of legislation.

The Judge also has to take account of decisions made in previous cases that have been tested in a higher court (usually the Court of Appeal).

With accident compensation, the Court takes into account your needs from your award for your continuing care; these expenses form part of your "needs". The Court also, wherever possible, tries to ensure that you keep at least some of the money you got for your "pain and suffering". This part of your damages is looked at as part of the "general circumstances" that are considered in every case.

The Judge then looks at the amount he would have awarded your ex husband in other circumstances, and reduces that amount to give a sort of discount to allow you to keep something for your pain and suffering. At the end of the day, though, the Judge still

counts the available compensation as just part of the "pot".

There are several cases where this approach has been tested. One example is the 1991 case of *Wagstaff* where the husband had received injury compensation and the Judge in the lower court thought that his disability should take priority. He gave the wife no lump sum. The higher court said that although there should be some discount on what the wife got, because of the source of the money, she was still entitled to something because she had needs that had to be met. In the end, she got a lump sum of £32,000.

In your case, the court would have considered your care needs, including the need for somewhere for you and the children to live. The fact that you had a report from your occupational therapist shows that all these factors were considered. The Judge would have had to balance your needs against those of your ex husband and he or she must have felt that enabling you to keep the house (which has presumably been adapted for you) and giving your ex a lump sum was the fairest solution.

It may sound harsh, but arriving at these decisions is an imperfect science in which the judges have a reasonable amount of discretion in how they apply the law to each case.

That brings me to the question of what you can do. I am afraid the answer is: not much. You can only appeal an order if the Judge plainly got the law wrong. As judges have quite a bit of leeway, unless they are way outside what is reasonable, then there is little scope for overturning the order. If you want to appeal, you have 28 days in which to do so. It is occasionally possible to appeal

later, but you have to have a very good reason for the delay.

You don't appear to be getting maintenance for yourself so your order is probably of the "clean break" variety; this means neither you nor your ex husband can make any more claims against each other. In the absence of being able to appeal, as the order is final, you cannot change it.

All I can suggest is that you might try to get an increase in your income through child maintenance. As you may know, except in very limited circumstances, the Court can now only record agreements for children's maintenance. Only the Child Support Agency (CSA) can sort out maintenance where there is a dispute.

Unless your order included a written agreement for payments for the kids, you can't ask the court to help. If it did not, all you can do is go to the CSA.

If there was an agreement written into the order, you might be able to ask the court to vary the amount upwards or, if there is an agreement, but your husband is failing to pay, to help force him to pay up! To be successful in either case, you would have to prove your ex husband really can afford to pay.

Even if there is a written agreement, you could choose to use the CSA, but bear in mind that once you go to them you can no longer go back to Court.

As the law stands, there is not much that can be done – except to try and change it.

Katy Rensten heads the family law department at Levenes solicitors, tel: 0208 8817777.

Advice given in Legal Eagle is based on the information received and can only be treated as general advice.

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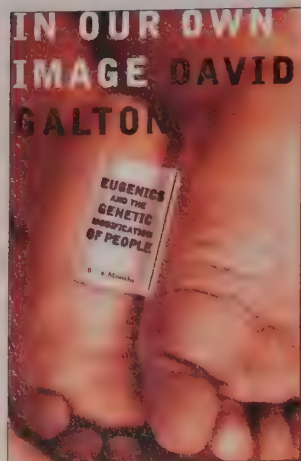
Ian Rideout from the charity 'Cerebral Palsy Action', based at Alness in Scotland, is confident that the Bambach Saddle Seat® will help to ease the pain and improve the mobility of many disabled people who are now forced to slump in uncomfortable positions that make movement difficult. He commented, "Improving their posture allows them freedom to move, and with that comes more capability and greater independence and self-esteem."

Young Jordan Pedley, 14, from Stafford, is one youngster whose life has been transformed. Jordan has cerebral palsy and has been a wheelchair user all his life. Since using the Bambach Saddle Seat®, as well as experiencing its many benefits at home and at school, he has also been able to take up the sport snooker! This has improved Jordan's concentration and confidence.

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and reproductive technologies raise moral and social dilemmas that will affect everyone.

If you want a gentle ramble through human genetics, this book is a good place to start. It covers topics from Plato to Darwin, through to the Human Genome Project and beyond. It contains important background information, clear explanations of the science, and some interesting ideas and observations.

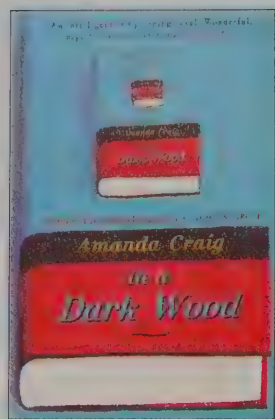
However, Galton's conversational style and lack of rigor can be frustrating. While he mentions different dilemmas posed by the new technologies, he fails to provide suggestions for solutions, aside from individual choice. His discussion focuses on controversial cases that have been covered in the

media, rather than relying on the wealth of social science data about the impact of genetics on individuals and families. And he does not engage with the bioethical debates surrounding issues of discrimination, wrongful birth and eugenics.

The disabled reader should be warned that there is no coverage of the disability rights challenge to eugenics. This is very much a doctor's argument. He is prone to let fellow professionals off the hook. For example, he blames politicians, rather than doctors, for the eugenics abuses of the early 20th century.

He concludes by suggesting that the best person to guide developments would be a medical scientist. Many do not share his confidence.

Tom Shakespeare



misunderstood condition of manic depression. On the face of it, Benedict Hunter's depression could happen to any of us. It's a modern story: the break-up of a marriage, the bleatings of precocious children that become too much to bear, his insecurity as an actor. But in a matter-of-fact way, he plumbs terrible depths: "Once a fortnight, I would emerge to buy groceries. Otherwise I slumped in an armchair without hope or energy".

While we sense that his professional failure isn't true, his lack of self-esteem is understandable. His father is

an overbearing, arrogant philanderer. We are taken further into the dark woods with the clever prop of fairy tales written by his mother, who committed suicide when Hunter was six.

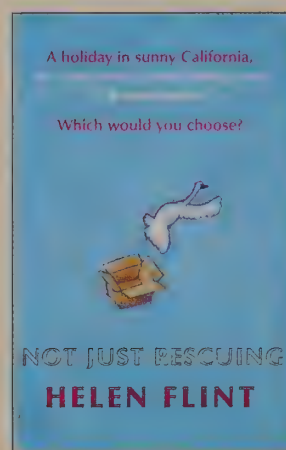
When his obsession with her mysterious life takes him to relatives in America, for the first time he experiences a great surge of elation. He falls in love. We are carried along in a tense drama, but filled with unease. He is not out of the woods yet, if ever. In life, there are no fairy-tale endings, but he is no longer without hope.

Marion Bull

Book news

Here are some recently published children's books which focus on disability issues.

The Multiple Sclerosis Trust has produced a booklet for young children whose parents have Multiple Sclerosis (MS). *My Dad has MS* (free, tel: 01462 476700) is written by Gary Hetherington, who has MS, and Carolyn Young, a doctor. In the book, a young boy learns his father has MS. By talking to his parents, he gains some insight into what this might mean.



The late Helen Flint's *Not Just Rescuing* (Egmont, £4.99) tells the story of two teenagers who spend the summer with their eccentric aunt in Bournemouth. While one of the characters is a wheelchair user, this is only incidental to the events that ensue in this entertaining book for young teenagers. A must-read for animal lovers.

In view of the alarming



increase in rates of heterosexually-acquired HIV last year, Adele Minchin's *The Beat Goes On* (Livewire, £5.99) will prove to be groundbreaking. It tells the story of a young girl, Emma, who learns she is HIV positive. While the book is a compelling and realistic insight into the troubles of being a teenager, it also addresses an issue that young people cannot ignore.

Finally, sci-fi fans will get into *Of Mice and Aliens* (Jessica Kingsley, £7.95) by Kathy Hooperman. Young Ben is learning to cope with his newly diagnosed Asperger Syndrome, but when an alien crash lands in his backyard, he faces a new set of complications. The book draws often humorous parallels between the troubles of communication that Ben and his alien friend both experience. In addition to being a fun read, it is a valuable teaching tool for shedding light on life with Asperger.

Sam Gillespie

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MORE GOOD NEWS!

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TV

Genetics was high on the tv agenda with BBC1's *Watchdog Healthcheck* tackling PGD (genetic engineering or cloning to you and me) and deciding that the jury is still out on that one.

Also on BBC1, *Question Time* included the crystallised thoughts of geneticist Dr Tom Shakespeare, who cut through the hot air like a knife through butter: it is so refreshing for an academic to base research on (his own) reality.

BBC2's series *Bitter Inheritance* dished up disturbing stories about some cruel disorders you hope you'll never get. The programme about Huntingdon's disease was more like drama than documentary: following a married father of two who waited three agonising weeks to discover whether he carried the gene for the disease that will kill his mother and brother prematurely. I wept for him when the doctor announced a negative result.

It wasn't all bad news though. ITV1's *Tonight with Trevor McDonald* told of a revolutionary treatment for dyslexia which involves developing balance and hand-eye co-ordination. Sounds too good to be true, but it does seem to work.

I caught an interesting episode of *The Bill* on ITV1 where the entire ensemble cast of actors with learning difficulties set an authentic backdrop for a story about Shauna (brilliantly played by Anna-Marie Heslop).

"Wheelchair-bound" (sic) Andrew Jeffreys scoured the Snowdonia countryside and got thoroughly muddled for BBC1's *Countryfile* report on accessible Woodstar 4WD bikes. The sucking/blowing mechanism for tetraplegic riders struck me as a complete inspiration. When can I go and do it please?

Jane Shepherd

London Disability Arts Forum is running an exhibition of paint and sculpture by Jayni Anderton, Yvonne Francis and Jennifer Hunter, three disabled women whose life experiences have changed their views of the world. *Exhibition runs between 11 February and 2 March at The Diorama Arts Centre, 34 Osnauburgh Street, London, tel: 020 7916 5484.*

Film



A Beautiful Mind Shallow Hal

Set against the backdrop of Cold War America, *A Beautiful Mind* is loosely based on the life of mathematical genius John Forbes Nash Jr.

Initially, we see him as a socially inept outsider at Princeton, avoiding conventional study while he awaits the big original idea to make his reputation. He almost gets thrown out, but when the idea comes (the paper on game theory), it overturns 150 years of thinking and subsequently wins him a Nobel Prize.

Even more surprisingly, this shy, awkward man finds love. But, as a future appears to be stretching ahead, his life is undermined by the onset of decades of schizophrenia. To reveal the form this takes would be unfair: this is a film with significant plot twists.

So far, so gripping. But it's the final third of the movie that's really intriguing. Nash grapples with life after psychiatric treatment. How can he return to his career on medication that stops him thinking straight?

As many others have done, he stops taking his pills. He determines to keep going through sheer will-power. Nash undoubtedly has an exceptional mind, but will that help him, or simply make him

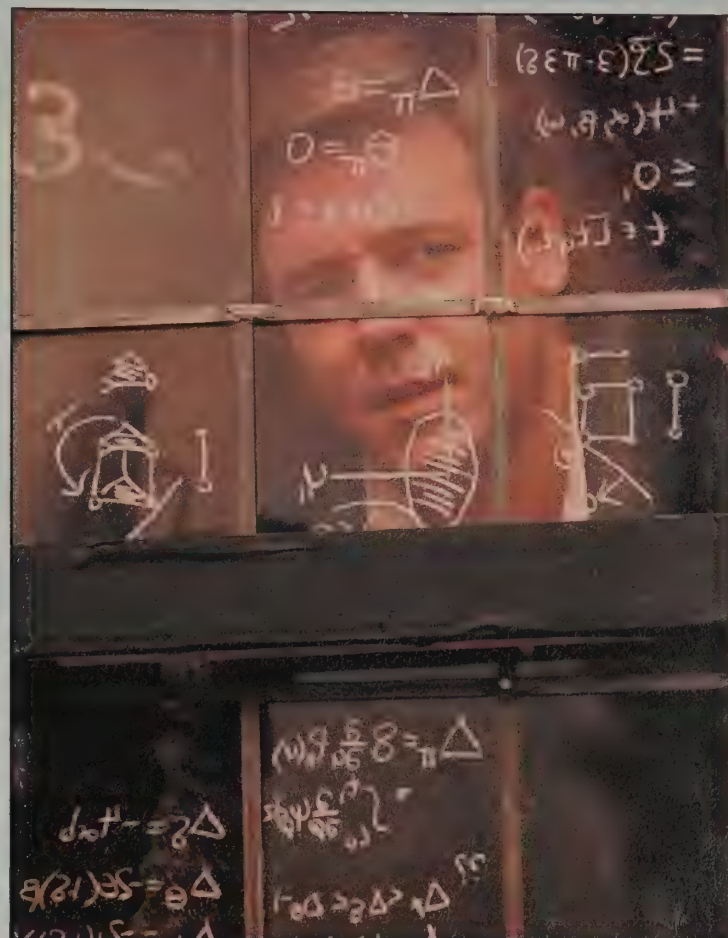
more vulnerable? The answer is never really in doubt. But it's still fascinating to see a major Hollywood movie present mental health disability from the point of view of the disabled person, and grapple with the idea that there are other approaches than medical ones.

In *Shallow Hal*, the new movie from gross-out kings the Farrelly brothers, Hal Larsen (Jack Black), a superficial klutz who judges women purely by their looks, is hypnotised to see their "inner beauty". He then falls in love with a fat girl who looks like Gwyneth Paltrow to him. When the hypnosis ends, Hal is shocked to find what the love of his life really looks like but then decides – surprise, surprise – that it's inner beauty that really matters.

The point is supported by the inclusion of Walt (Rene Kirby), a young man with spina bifida who walks on all fours, carefully defined as a successful dotcom entrepreneur.

The Farrellies work hard to be serious. But the idea that you shouldn't judge people by appearances – a theme more wittily expressed in *Shrek* – is hardly a social model for disability. The Farrellies were much funnier when they made simple gross-out comedy: nothing in *Shallow Hal* comes close to the tasteless exuberance of *There's Something about Mary*. Though well-intentioned, they haven't achieved enough to make the loss worthwhile.

Allan Sutherland



American Beauties: Maths wiz Russell Crowe battles with his *Beautiful Mind* (above) while Gwyneth Paltrow rocks the boat in *Shallow Hal* (below)

Exhibitions



It would be hard to overstate the significance of Paul Klee to 20th century art. Between 1900 and his death in 1940, he produced a huge and diverse body of work. At a superficial level there is something for everyone, and on this basis alone I would recommend anyone to visit the current show at the Hayward Gallery, *The Nature of Creation*.

After fleeing from the Nazis to Switzerland in 1935, Klee developed scleroderma, which would precipitate his death five years later. This last period of his life was immensely productive, and this exhibition provides the opportunity to consider its impact on his work.

The thing that most clearly strikes me about many of the late works is the way in which his lines are broken up. On one hand this gives the impression of a drawing that has fallen apart, yet each section of line appears free to suggest it has



Red and White Domes, 1914

become something else entirely. This creates a sense of regeneration emerging from limitation and loss.

The disability movement has been complaining for years about how hard it is for disabled artists to gain admission to the mainstream. While true, it is useful to remember that many mainstream artists, and some of the great among them, were in fact disabled. How delightful to claim Klee as one of us! I leave the last words to him: "The picture has no particular purpose. It only has the purpose of making us happy."

Adam Reynolds

FREEDOM IN FOCUS 2002

There's still time to give it your best shot!

For all you keen photographers who haven't yet heard about this competition, you still have time to get snapping! Once again, FIF is brought to you by *Disability Now* and Leonard Cheshire and invites disabled amateur photographers of all ages to either take or direct images in the categories of "landscapes" (eg holiday shots, buildings, cities) and/or "portraits" (eg friends, family, classmates). You may want your pictures to have a disability theme, but this is not compulsory. Each category will have a winner and a runner-up in two age groups, under-18 and 18-and-over. FIF reaches its climax at the House of Lords in June, where the best images will be exhibited and winners awarded their prizes.

Great prizes!

- All four winners will receive a digital camera, with runners-up getting a standard 35mm camera.
- 18-and-over winners will also receive one week half-board at Park House Hotel, Sandringham (Princess Diana's childhood home) for themselves and a partner/friend
- Under 18s will have a trip on the London Eye with professional photographer Graham Bool immediately after the reception, when they can try out their new cameras.

Judges for this year's competition include Lara Masters, (actress, writer and co-presenter of *That's Esther*), Graham Bool (professional photographer) and Chris Cheesman (news editor of *Amateur Photographer*).

Closing date for entries is 29 April 2002. For more details and an application form, contact Judith Reid at *Disability Now*, tel: 020 7619 7319, or email: judith.reid@scope.org.uk

Step out and be streetwise

Street crime affects us all, and with mobile phone theft on the increase, it is becoming ever more important to be vigilant while out and about.

Dan Batten offers some streetwise tips

When people are asked how they would defend themselves in sticky situations, many imagine that they would react like Mike Tyson at a press conference, unleashing a torrent of blows to leave their assailant in a heap. Not only is this approach likely to put you in a very dangerous spot if people fight back harder; it will also get you into trouble with the law.

The best way to stay out of trouble is to learn to avoid it before it starts.

Reassuringly, police statistics show that the likelihood of being assaulted is extremely rare, so you shouldn't ever have to fight your way out of trouble. But it's always worth having a few tricks up your sleeve to evade the bad guys, especially if the option to defend yourself physically isn't on the cards.

First of all, it's worth considering how you come across to others. It may sound harsh, but if you look like a victim, you stand more chance of becoming one. The best antidote for this is a dose of good old fashioned confidence. Even if you don't feel particularly self assured, a calm exterior will stand you in good stead. This is especially true if you're somewhere you don't feel safe or are not familiar with.

A part of appearing confident is remembering never to let your head drop if you don't know where you are. Looking certain, combined with a purposeful walk (or wheel) is one of the easiest ways to keep unwarranted

attention at bay. But it is vital to move as naturally as possible, and not put on any false fronts.

"People have their own mannerisms and gait and to adopt 'recommended' ones can make them appear unnatural and single them out," says Phil Hardy, of personal safety training company Securicare. "The best thing is to try and act as naturally as possible".

It's vital to keep an eye on what's going on around you without looking like you're scouting the area. It's better not to listen to a walkman while you are on the move or using a cash machine. "Follow your gut instincts and move away if you don't feel certain of a situation," says Phil.

Even though it's wise to take a fresh route if you feel unsafe, a mistake which can identify you as a stranger is referring to a map. Planning a safe route before your journey can save you a lot of time and possible

trouble. If you know someone who lives or works in the area you are visiting, talk to them to see whether there are any specific places that are worth avoiding. You may also want to carry a personal alarm to attract attention.

It's a good idea to let someone know when you are going somewhere you are not familiar with. If you carry a mobile phone you can let people know where you are at regular intervals, or dial for help if you feel uneasy. If your phone has hot keys, programme a useful number to one of these and you'll be able

SAM GILLESPIE



Mind your money: It pays to be extra vigilant when using cash machines

to dial it at the press of a button, rather than dialling in full or searching for the number in the phone's memory.

Although mobiles are extremely useful, they have their downside. Police figures quote them as one of the most frequently stolen items: up to 10,000 phones are stolen every month. Two thirds of theft victims are between 13 and 16 years olds. With this in mind, it's worth considering how you use your phone. If you can, use a hands-free kit connected to your phone in a pocket.

Alternatively, a new technology called Bluetooth lets you wear a small earpiece and microphone which interact with your Bluetooth phone using wireless technology. You can dial or answer a call using your voice, so your phone need never leave your pocket.

Another reason that people can be threatened is their appearance. Everybody should be allowed to dress how they want, but unfortunately it's a good idea to alter your appearance to suit your surroundings if you suspect it will draw unwanted attention to you. If you know that a place has a high street theft rate of items such as jewellery then don't wear any, or if you must, don't flaunt it.

Although no one wants to be

stopped from going where they want to, adhering to the maxim "safety in numbers" and avoiding potential danger zones can help to avoid trouble.

A piece in rock magazine *Kerrang!* illustrated the unprovoked bullying of teenage rock fans in Manchester by "townies" (young trendy people) who objected to the dress code of the average "rocker". The fans responded by arranging weekend gatherings together in the town centre, moving together *en masse*. This method may sound confrontational, but none of the fans interviewed wanted trouble and said it was the only way many of them felt safe.

A few simple actions can mean the difference between staying safe and putting yourself in danger. Follow DN's tips and you'll never need to worry about who's behind you again.

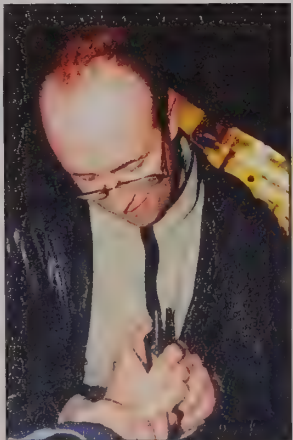
Further information on staying safe for people with learning disabilities can be found online at: www.met.police.uk/news/stories/staysafe.htm.

Walk Easy supply legal personal attack alarms, tel: 01223 892623.

Securicare operate courses in conflict management, physical intervention and positive physical response, tel: 01904 492442 or visit www.securicare.com.

Ten trouble-free tips

1. Don't flash wallets and mobile phones around: keep them close to your body, in inside or zipped pockets.
2. Be alert. Stay tuned to your surroundings – especially if you are somewhere strange.
3. Send the message that you are calm, confident and know where you're going.
4. If you are making an unusual journey, let someone know your planned route and estimated time of arrival.
5. Keep to busy and well-lit areas if possible. Avoid wooded areas, parking lots and alleyways.
6. If you are using a map, use it sparingly: people who look lost can attract undesirable attention.
7. Dress sensibly for the area you will be travelling through.
8. Remember that it is illegal to use weapons in the UK, even for self-defence.
9. If possible, try and travel with other people.
10. Be realistic about your limitations – avoid places or situations that put you at risk.



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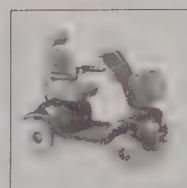
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MOBILITY CONSULTANTS

Harvey Cowe has been using personal assistants for over a decade. But he still finds the relationship between user and provider a delicate one to get right. Here, he speaks about his experiences, and asks to hear some of yours

Does personal assistance work?

I incurred a spinal cord injury after a traffic accident in 1983, and need assistance with most daily living tasks.

Although she had little choice, my partner assisted with my needs for the first five years of my disability. I now receive funding from the Independent Living Fund and social services to employ my personal assistants (PAs) full time, although my partner still contributes to some of my personal care needs.

My experiences of finding suitable PAs have been mixed, but mostly negative.

I advertise in my local free

'feel right' filter are then interviewed at my home.

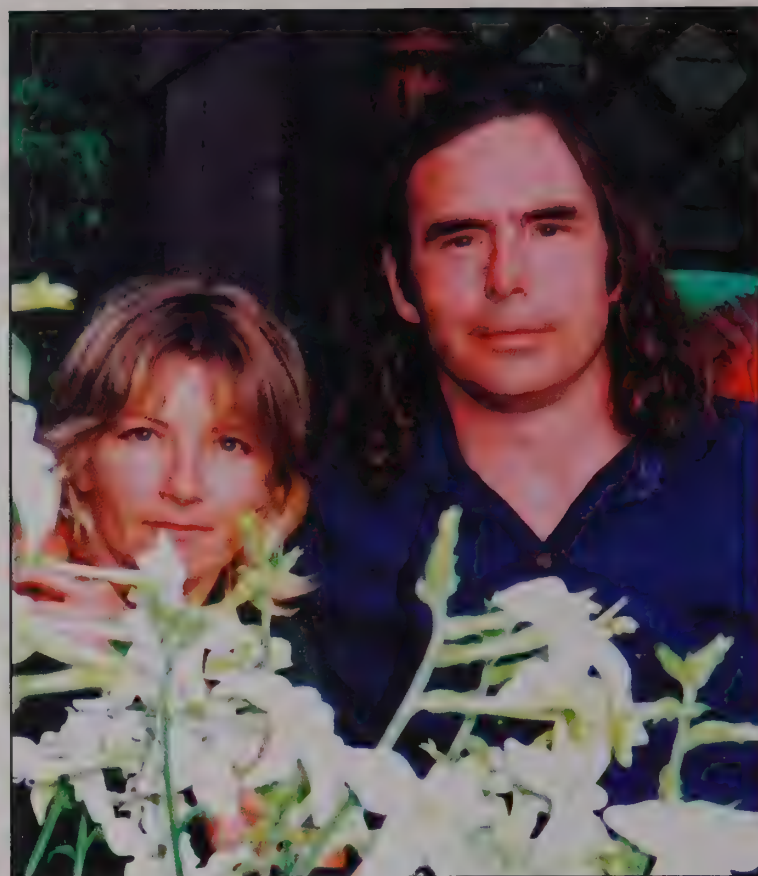
I sit with a list of interview questions on my lap, nervously awaiting the first interviewee while rehearsing my script.

I sometimes find it difficult to explain aspects of the job without sounding apologetic. On a number of occasions, I don't even mention them! How do you tell someone that they will have to wash your penis, put on a sheath and clean your bum after using the toilet without feeling like you want the ground to swallow you up?

I know that my PA is

other disabled people say that a PA is "like your arms and legs", but I never see my assistant this way. If I were suddenly endowed with arms and legs, I'd be up there, feather duster in hand, sweeping the cobwebs from my bedroom ceiling. I'd wash and clean the van, trim my sideburns and weed the garden. I'd drive to the beach, meet people, travel to far places and get up to all sorts of sexual delights. My dreams, aspirations and goals would suddenly seem attainable. I would feel liberated and empowered.

But I feel stifled and frustrated most of the time. Should I think and act the way I would have before my accident, as if I had no impairment? I doubt my PAs would be able to act as my arms and legs, pre-impairment. They would rebel and join a union – and rightfully so, because I would work them till they dropped. It's not that I'm sadistic: I've just always been industrious – I can never sit still.



Ball of confusion: Cowe (right) with his partner, Sheree

As mentioned, my partner continues to contribute towards some of my personal care. I can see both positive and negative aspects of such an arrangement, and wonder how others feel. I would prefer to receive assistance, especially my personal care, from someone I care about and who cares about me. But because the Independent Living Fund will not allow family members, friends or spouses to be paid, and given the extra complications of benefit rules, this is difficult. Even if it would be possible to pay my partner, how would this affect our relationship? Is it possible for

such a relationship to work harmoniously without encroaching on each other's freedom and independence? What happens if you have an argument with the person who is both your partner and personal assistant?

I am interested to find out if other people's personal relationships have been affected in similar ways. I am doing a PhD in disability studies at Sheffield University, focusing on the experiences of disabled people who require assistance with daily living. I'm sure others are in a similar predicament, and I'd be very interested to learn about their experiences.

I should make it clear that I'm not seeking advice on how I could improve my predicament. I am trying to be open and honest about my own confusions because I want people to know that if they come forward to give information about their situation, I will probably understand if their story is disturbing too.

I would also like to hear from people who have successful relationships with personal assistants, as positive experiences may improve the situation of others. The intention behind the research is to document the experiences and issues that are important to us, with a view to making recommendations for relevant practical and policy changes.

If you feel that you would like to contribute to the research, please contact me. All information will be treated as confidential and I would be very glad to hear from anyone and get as many different viewpoints as possible.

Contact:
harvey.cowe@btinternet.com
tel: 01273 702968
fax: 01273 417418

'I am trying to be open and honest about the extent of my own confusions because I want people to know that if they come forward to give information about their situation, I will probably understand'

paper, because this is cheapest. Recruiting usually entails filtering scores of people over the telephone. Those who manage to pass through my

supposed to assist me, but I am always confused about which needs I am rightfully able to ask assistance with.

I've heard care agencies and

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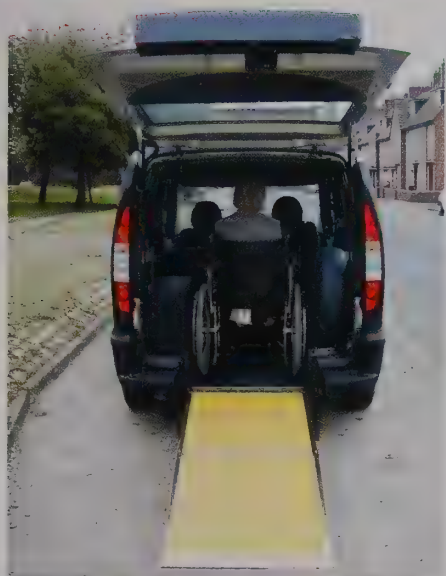
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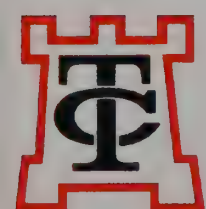
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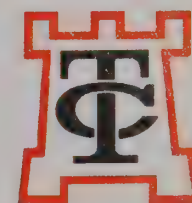
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Dear Ann

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



I want to take risks

Sometime ago you replied to a rather nervous reader who was bored and wanted to change her life, but only wanted to progress slowly. That's fair enough, but I want to take risks and face challenges. Life is so short; I am already 60, and disabled. Do you recommend taking risks?

Marguerite, Brighton

Life is to be lived, and that always means taking risks. I believe that to make everything yield to considerations of safety is to invite a different risk: that of living without opportunity, progress or growth.

I read the other day: "to love is to risk, to try new ideas and

methods is to risk, to be open to new friendships, new experiences, new challenges and changes: all involve risks. The costs are occasional failure and the likelihood of suffering, but the prizes are great."

I recommend you check out the Dark Horse Venture award, a scheme for people aged 55 and over. It aims to discover hidden talents and abilities, and to put them to creative and practical use.

You join the scheme by taking up an activity of your own choice – something you have not seriously tried before. People with disabilities are especially encouraged to join the scheme.

Taxi concessions

I am a registered blind person who finds it difficult to get to the shopping centre and other amenities which are a little distance away. I can't afford to use taxis and there is no regular bus service. Do you have any suggestions?

Brian, Cheshire

You may find that your council offers local transport concessions for registered blind people. They may, for example, issue bus tokens which could be used towards the cost of taxi journeys.

They may also operate a system where you can apply for a book of vouchers to use to obtain discounts on local taxi

Banking without signing

My daughter cannot sign her name, so she has difficulties authorising movements of money. I don't want to take on the power of attorney when my daughter is able to decide what she wants to do with her finances. Can you advise me?

Phyllis, Stockport

The British Banker's Association has a very useful leaflet, *BankFacts – signing your name: overcoming difficulties*.

The leaflet suggests some practical solutions to handwriting problems and also sets out how customers experiencing these problems can expect banks to help.

journeys or issue you with a taxi card for the same purpose.

To find out more, you should contact your local council and ask for someone who deals with assisted transport for disabled people.

Equipped for life

A year ago, I had a severe accident and since then I have spent a lot of time in hospital, while also coming to terms with a different lifestyle. I was an active 18-year old, joining in sports and adventurous pursuits. Now I want to adapt to my changed circumstances and live as normal a life as possible.

I have found some sporting organisations for disabled people but I also want to find out about aids and equipment that will help me to live as independent a life as possible. I need unbiased, knowledgeable advice rather than relying on advertisements.

Derek, Doncaster

I can see that you are determined that while your life will be very different, you will carry on being the adventurous person you were before your

accident. You will be interested in the Sports Gateway information in a letter from Jonathan Webb, printed below.

You are wise to find out about aids and equipment as soon as possible. Many people struggle on with activities that could be greatly helped with the right piece of equipment.

You would find a visit to a Disability Living Centre helpful. Your nearest is the Disability Doncaster Resource Centre. They have a range of equipment on display, including kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, mobility and so on. They can provide you with free, unbiased information and advice.

Gateway of opportunity

Talking about sport as you do on occasion, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the Sports Gateway, Sport England's database of sporting information that covers a wide range of topics and contact information.

A significant and popular element is the "Where to Play" section which lists over 4,000 sporting agencies around the country and includes swimming pools, sports halls, indoor tennis centres and athletic tracks. Also included is information on disability access, disability car parking and disability trained staff.

Jonathan Webb, Sports Gateway Project Manager

The Blue Badge Network, 198 Wolverhampton Street, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1DZ, tel: 01384 257001

Dark Horse Venture, Kelton, Woodlands Road, Liverpool L17 0AN, tel: 0151 729 0092

British Bankers' Association, Pinners Hall, 105-108 Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1EX

Disabled Living Centres Council, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Manchester M8 8QA, tel: 0161 834 1044

Disability Doncaster Resource Centre, Heavens Walk, Doncaster DN4 5HZ, tel: 01302 769219

Sports Gateway, Sport England, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP tel: 020 7273 1686

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Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a post-graduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

In every dream home

Here's equipment that could work for you rather than against you, tried and tested by Anne Davies

A bread knife with serrations, which counter-balance the natural twisting motion of the left hand to give a straight cut, is available from Anything Left-handed. £13.95, www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk

Cole and Mason have a really stylish stainless steel potato masher (*below, left*) with a horizontal handle which makes it easier to use. £9.99. For stockists tel: 01252 522 322.

WL Culinaire have a garlic machine which presses garlic cleanly and easily and also stores it to keep it fresh, £6.29. Their unique hot tea pot, with a cafetière style plunger, stops the tea stewing and keeps it hot for up to two hours. £22.99, from some high street stores or visit www.culinaire.com

For the pastry chefs out there, why not try a set of three Dexam Farringdon pastry cutters with handles to make them easier to use, £1.75. Dexam also has a lifting fork which is ideal for taking anything large out of a pan, such as a chicken or a joint of meat, £1.99, and a double oven glove, £2.95. Tel: 01730 811 811 for stockists or visit www.dexam.co.uk

If you're going to be digging deep into the recesses of your



oven, Cucina Direct have a long oven gauntlet with a special nylon steam and grease barrier which offers extra protection while remaining soft and easy to use, £9. They also have a baking tray with low sides. £8, tel: 020 8246 4311 or www.cucinadirect.co.uk

Tefal have a new, intelligent sandwich toaster, called the Visio. The heating element is built into the clear glass lid and the Visi also has a unique "thermosignal indicator" that tells you when your sandwich is cooked inside and crunchy on the outside. £34.99, tel: 0854 602 1454 or visit www.tefal.co.uk

They also have an updated version of their Gourmet Multicooker (*above*) which fries, steams, grills, roasts and bakes. It has a four setting thermostat control, a toughened glass lid and a hinged heating element for easy cleaning, and is also dishwasher safe. £59.99.

Morphy Richards have a new purple and yellow, lightweight, bagless vacuum cleaner, the POD 73120/1300w (*below*), which is well worth

thinking about if you have a small flat. Dust is collected in the translucent purple section so you can see when it needs emptying. Both the purple section and filter are simple to remove, the automatic cable rewind mechanism is fast and efficient, and the powerful suction can be adjusted with fingertip control on the handle. The vacuum comes with wheeled floor nozzle, snap-on dusting brush and crevice tool. Suggested retail price: £49.49, tel: 08540 777 700 or visit www.morphyrichards.co.uk

Munch through the day – the Irish way

17 March is St Patrick's Day and a great way to celebrate it is by indulging in a little traditional cuisine (and Guinness, of course)

Start the day with traditional soda bread served with warm Galtee puddings (black or white) and bacon, or with butter (Irish of course!) and Ballymore country style marmalade. Packets of soda bread mix are available in most supermarkets.

For a party, try the excellent quality Bantry Bay mussels from Tesco, harvested and processed within 24 hours. Or try some Irish smoked salmon served with a warm salad.

End your meal with a good cheeseboard made from the award-winning, creamy Cachel Blue and Cooleeney Farmhouse, a Camembert-like cheese (both from Tipperary and available from good cheese shops and Somerfield). Try throwing in some



Ardration Farmhouse, a semi-soft cheese from Cork (available from Waitrose).

Wash it all down with Guinness (of course!)

To finish the day, tuck into a few slices of Barmbrack, a dense fruit loaf available from Tesco and Sainsbury's, and delicious, handcrafted truffles with a piping cup of Irish Coffee. More food ideas: www.bordbia.ie www.bim.ie

Anne Davies



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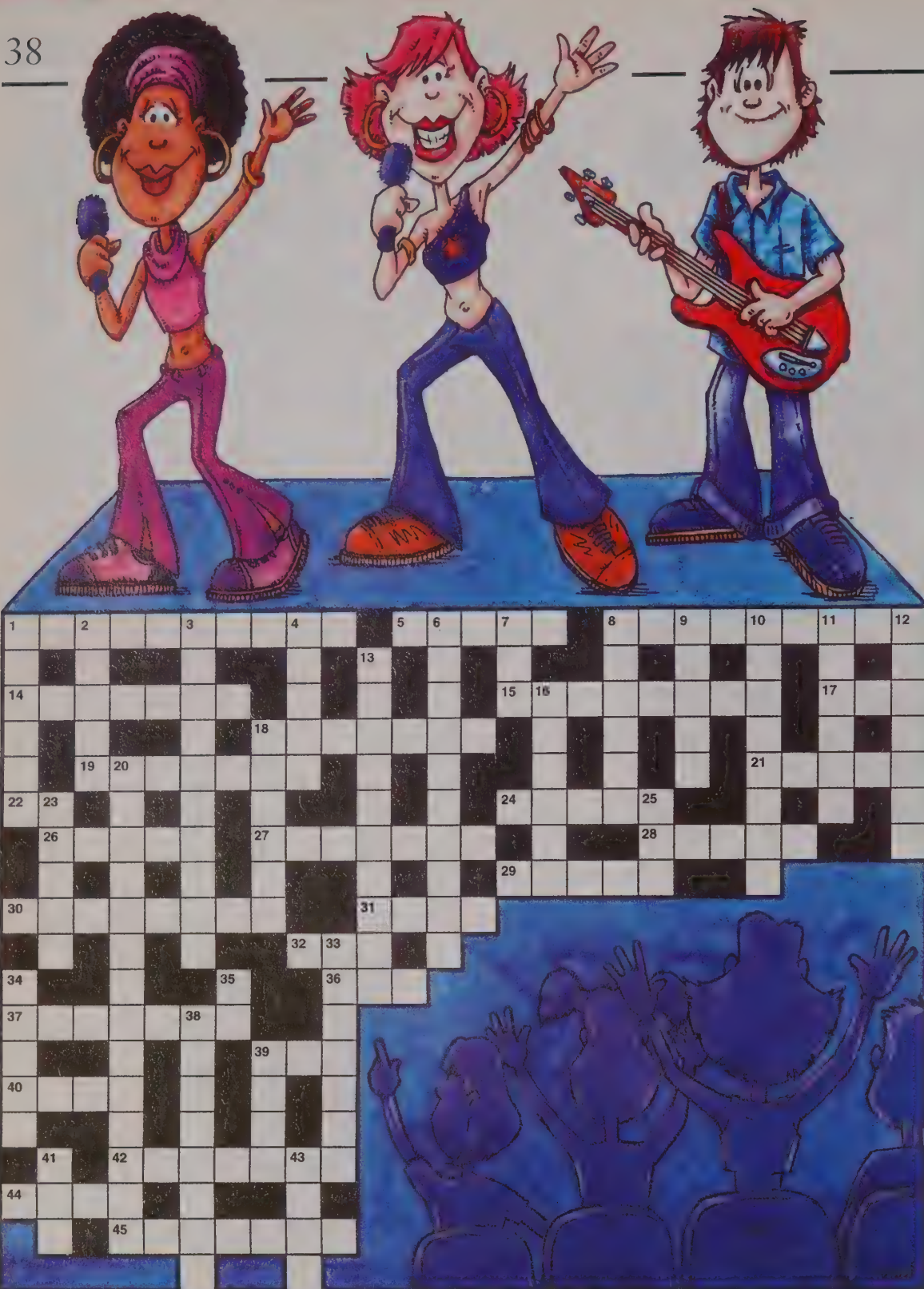
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www.rainbow-rehab.co.uk





Think you're top of the pops? Try our music crossword and see if your knowledge is pitch perfect – or hits too many bum notes.

ACROSS

1. Their albums include *Rubber Soul* and *Abbey Road* (3-7)
5. Faith, who had a 1997 No.1 single *I'll be Missing you* with Puff Daddy (5)
8. Group of musicians playing together (9)
14. Super Furry musical creatures (7)
15. Irish boy band, the only group to reach No.1 with their first seven releases (8)
17. *I'm _____ In Love*, a pop classic by 10 CC (3)
18. See 9 Down
19. Cartoon teenagers who had a 1969 No.1 single with *Sugar Sugar* (7)
21. **And 11 Down.** Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreres (5,5)
22. Short album title by Peter Gabriel (2)
24. Colourful music (5)
26. Instrument associated with Liberace, Ashkenazy and Elton John (5)
27. Rock group whose members have included Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford (7)
28. Group featuring the Gallagher brothers (5)
29. _____ to _____, a funeral song by David Bowie (5)
30. See 34 Down
31. Number of *Beethoven* symphonies (4)
32. *My Generation* and *Won't Get Fooled Again* group (3)
36. English National Opera (3)
37. City mentioned twice in a Frank Sinatra song (3,4)
39. French instrumental duo (3)
40. McGregor, a singing star in *Moulin Rouge* (4)
42. Song sung at bed-time (7)
44. Scottish singer whose career started with *Shout* (4)
45. All-female group with an everlasting appeal (7)

DOWN

1. *Driftwood* and *Coming Around* are among their hits (6)
2. Madonna starred in the film version of this musical (5)
3. Elvis Presley's first UK No.1 single (3,5,2)
4. In hotel, visions of this singer appear! (5) (Anag)
6. *Good _____*, the classic Beach Boys hit (10)
7. _____ *I'm Here*, a hit single for Queen (3)
8. A note seven diatonic degrees from a given note (6)
9. **And 18 Across.** Singer who received a knighthood in 1995 (5,7)
10. Type of guitar played by Hendrix and Clapton (7)
11. See 21 Across
12. Clumsy way to describe Simon without Garfunkel! (7)
13. Member of 1 Across, murdered in 1980 (4,6)
16. *Hotel California* group (6)
18. Music associated with Bob Marley (6)
20. George Gershwin's great composition for piano and orchestra (8,2,4)
23. *Rigoletto*, *La Boheme* or *Carmen* (5)
25. Abba's cry for help (1,1,1)
33. Group which emerged from *Popstars* (7)
34. **And 30 Across.** 1981 single by Queen and David Bowie (5,8)
35. _____ *Computer*, a Radiohead album (2)
38. It went round and round for The Beatles! (8)
39. The hit musical *Mamma Mia* is based on this group's music (4)
41. In 1974, this group had No.1 hits with *Tiger Feet* and *Lonely This Christmas* (3)
43. Musical rhythm (4)

CROSSWORD SPONSORED BY

Creating opportunities with disabled people

LEONARD CHESHIRE

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN
ILLUSTRATION BY VALERIE BARR
ANSWERS ON PAGE 40

Independent Living London, the UK's leading event promoting independence and aiding daily life for the elderly, the less able, their carers and healthcare professionals.

New areas for 2002 include:

- Association and Charity Village
- Complimentary Therapy Zone
- The Hobby Trail including gardening, art, music and sport



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18 & 19 September 2002
Wembley, London

Put a date in your diary today for
Independent Living London



For the latest information
call 0870 429 4372 or visit
www.independentlivingevents.co.uk

Candid Dan



"General Batten" gets stuck into some serious planning

Life has been running at a substantially slower pace than usual lately, for which I'm very thankful. But if you think this is just a metaphor for me being glued to my sofa, shooting PlayStation generated monsters with Metallica playing loudly on the stereo, think again. With two weddings and corresponding best man duties to attend to, a few military planning and scouting sessions have been taking place.

Hardest of all has been trying to find "dirt" on Dave for one of my speeches. Having emailed and spoken to countless friends of his, all I ever hear are cries of what a wonderful bloke he is. My suspicion that he could be Snow White's grandson are gaining credibility daily and may force me to take a different approach to how I pen his oration.

This problem will not rear its head when I come to write my piece for other groom Windsor, on whom I have enough dirt to keep *Ground Force* going for a whole series. Co-best man Bob and I have strict instructions to find a hotel "near the action" in Amsterdam for his stag weekend. Since when did Winz take up an interest in tulip picking, I'll never know.

• What's on

The Child Development and Disability Group of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Handsel Trust and the Royal College of Nursing host *Children with Complex Healthcare Needs: supporting child and family at home and school*, 15 March, Assembly Rooms, Derby. The conference is aimed at those involved in the care of children with disabilities, including doctors, physiotherapists and parents. Contact Peter Limbrick at the Handsel Trust, tel/fax: 0161 740 7757, email: p.limbrick@u.genie.co.uk

Environmental Trainers Network (ETN) will host *Naturally Accessible – opening the environment to disabled people*, 6 March, Bristol. The session will consider issues and barriers faced by disabled people when visiting the countryside or getting involved in environmental activities, and aims to provide practical advice on overcoming them. Further ideas to be discussed will include current guidelines and legislation, sources of financial support and information, and ways to improve the accessibility of your own sites. £100/£120 + VAT. Environmental Trainers Network, tel: 0121 358 2155, email: etn@ukgateway.net

The National Institute for Conductive Education in Birmingham is holding a series of professional development workshops which will look at the use of conductive education as an educational approach to the treatment of specific disabilities, including Parkinson's disease

(15 March) multiple sclerosis (12 April) and stroke (17 May). Contact Nicola Sandford, tel: 0121 449 1569, email: nikki@conductive-education.org.uk

Magpie Dance is a group of adults with learning difficulties. They regularly perform and undertake

dance classes and workshops and encourage all people, regardless of their ability, to take a full and integrated part in the artistic life of the community. This has contributed to increasing people's awareness of what can be achieved by those with learning difficulties. If you would like further

details about Magpie's dance classes, workshops or performances, call Avril Hitman, artistic director, tel: 020 8467 3331 or John Cutting, administrator, tel: 020 8657 0558. Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm.

The Council of Disabled People in Warwickshire have published *Learning from*

experience: involving black disabled people in shaping services. The report shows the results of a one-year research project and looks at the barriers to involvement and strategies to involve black people in services and action planning. £10 plus £2 p&cp. Tel: 01926 420702, fax: 01926 315267.

ATTENTION

DN cannot guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Due to deadlines, please send details at the earliest opportunity.

DID YOU KNOW?

DN is available on tape, disk and by e-mail. Contact Talking Newspapers, see Imprint, page 2.



Mobility: for wheelchair users it means a great deal more than merely the ability to go from A to B. It is the freedom to do the everyday things that the able-bodied take for granted, from a mundane trip to the supermarket to a memorable tour of Europe.

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• Websites

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People have launched a new website on the subject of universal neonatal hearing screening. It brings together over 100 articles, statements of experience and other useful material to help teachers, speech and language therapists and other professionals work effectively with deaf babies and their families. www.deafnessatbirth.org.uk

www.4dp.com have launched a dating site devoted to helping disabled people find partners. The new site lets users enter a personal profile and photograph, and allows them to search a database of members. www.4dpTogether.com

Access4fitness is a site designed to help more disabled people access fitness centres throughout the UK. It looks at accessible gyms and aims to become a focal point for fitness centre operators who want to become more aware of inclusive fitness. www.access4fitness.org.uk

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1. The Beatles 5. Evans 8. Orchestra 14. Animals 15. Westlife 17. Not 18. Richard 19. Archies 21. Three 22. So 21. ER 22. Strike 24. Blues 26. Piano 27. Genesis 28. Oasis 29. Ashes 30. Pressure 31. Nine 32. Who 36. ENO 37. New York 39. Air 40. Ewan 42. Lullaby 44. Lulu 45. Eternal

DOWN: 1. Travis 2. Evita 3. All Shook Up 4. Elvis 6. Vibrations 7. Now 8. Octave 9. Cliff 10. Electric 11. Tenors 12. Artless 13. John Lennon 16. Eagles 18. Reggae 20. Rhapsody in Blue 23. Opera 25. S.O.S. 33. Hear'say 34. Under 35. Ok 38. Revolver 39. Abba 41. Mud 43. Beat

DN WEBSITE UPDATE

The DN website discussion forum has been improved. To make it easier and quicker to communicate with other DN readers, we now have 16 forums covering:

access • arts • communication • education • employment • equipment/technology • finance • health & disabilities • international topics • legislation • leisure • politics • social issues • sport • transport & parking • other topics.

So, why not visit and have your say!

• Publications

Lewes and Wealden District Councils have published the third addition of *Sussex Country Attractions for All* – a guide to tourist attractions aimed specifically at disabled people. The guide includes information on accessible country walks, seaside attractions, historic houses, leisure centres and farms. Large print copies, taped copies and a website will shortly be available. Free from tourist information centres, libraries or Lewes District Council's access officer, Sue Dunkley. Tel: 01273 484409, minicom: 01273 484488.

The National Black Carers Workers Network in association with The Afya Trust has produced *We Care Too: a Good Practice Guide for People Working with Black Carers*. Written by care workers, it looks at the experiences of black carers, and discusses how recognition of services and support to black carers can be improved. Copies from Rosemary Wallace, tel: 020 7582 0400 or Patricia Orr, tel: 020 7828 7720, minicom: 07889 140139.

Mind, the mental health charity, has published *The Mind Guide to Relaxation*. It explains various ways of relaxing and looks at techniques to aid relaxation, including taking brief pauses throughout the day, using relaxation tapes and what to

do after a relaxation session. £1 plus a 44p A4 SAE from Mind Publications, 15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ, email: publications@mind.org.uk, tel: 020 8221 9666.

Contact a Family has published the 2002 edition of the *Directory of Specific Conditions and Rare Disorders*. Entries include medical descriptions of conditions, along with information on inheritance patterns, pre-natal diagnosis and related conditions. £30 including p&p. Contact Debbie Bunyan on 020 7608 8700 or visit www.cafamily.org.uk

British Epilepsy Association (BEA) has launched *The Epilepsy Passport*, a foreign language phrase book designed to give travellers with epilepsy help in case they have a seizure abroad. It contains basic first aid information in seven European languages and acts as an identity card for people with epilepsy. Contact the BEA Freephone Helpline, tel: 0800 800 5050.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind has produced a free information booklet *Shopping made easy*. The booklet looks at various methods of help available, and, in particular, focuses on Internet shopping. Tel: 020 7388 1266, website: www.rnib.org.uk

The NSPCC is relaunching its Child Protection Helpline service for deaf and hard of hearing children and adults. The helpline provides callers with 24-hour access to a child protection officer, and offers counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned that a child is at risk of abuse. Textphone: 0800 056 5666.

Mind in Croydon has released *Pillar to Post*, a video which looks at mental health problems and substance abuse, often known as dual diagnosis. It examines the problem people with a dual diagnosis have trying to find appropriate services, and asks how mental health services can take a more flexible approach to meeting people's needs. £35 from Mind Publications, 15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ, tel: 020 8221 9666, or email: publications@mind.org.uk

The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) has published two new booklets, *Epilepsy* and *Pregnancy and Childbirth*, as part of their *Your Good Health* series. £5 plus 50p p&p, each from: BILD Publications, Plymbridge Distributors, Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PZ, UK. Tel: 01752 202301, fax: 01752 202333, website: www.plymbridge.com

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) has published their *Special Education Handbook*. It gives parents expert advice and information on how to appeal against decisions made by education professionals and make a complaint. It explains the impact of case law on crucial areas such as writing a statement and naming a school in a statement. It also includes an update of organisations, legislation and publications. Contact Margaret McGowan, tel: 020 7354 8318 or visit www.ace-ed.org.uk

Age Concern has published *An Introductory Guide to Community Care*. Aimed at professional workers, family and voluntary carers, it looks at areas including the organisation of care services, care team member roles and individual care plans. £6.99, tel: 020 8765 7200, fax: 020 8765 1366, email: ace@ace.org.uk; website: www.ace.org.uk

Reach for the sky...



The ability to stand up can have a dramatic impact on a disabled person's well-being.

To be able to chat face-to-face at a party or in the pub, play darts, reach heights in the workplace, deal with shop assistants at eye-level rather than counter-level, cook on the barbecue... the benefits are legion. And it is a whole lot cheaper to buy a Stand-up Wheelchair than refit a kitchen, let alone the house or workplace!

There are medical benefits too. Standing up can:

- alleviate pressure
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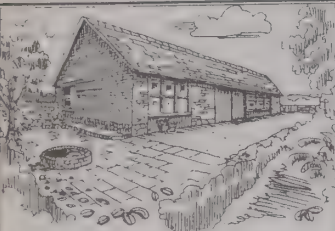
Levo Stand-up Wheelchairs are portable, plain or brightly coloured and are available in a variety of powered and non-powered configurations.

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Email: levo@gerald-simonds.co.uk, Website: www.gerald-simonds.co.uk

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Gerald Simonds Healthcare Ltd

• Holidays (cont. see pg 46)

ROYAL DEESIDE SCOTLAND
NEW for 2002. 4 superb self catering cottages located on the banks of the river next to Balmoral. Designed and equipped to the highest standard with state of the art facilities for people with disabilities, their families and friends. Please contact: CRATHIE OPPORTUNITY HOLIDAYS
Tel: 013397 42002 for more details
or email: info@crathieholidays.org.uk
www.crathieholidays.org.uk



Take a break at Jay's Barn
Jay's Barn (sleeps 4) has been specifically designed & rebuilt for disabled people. Beautifully situated in its own grounds/garden. Easy access to Alton Towers, Peak District, The Potteries, or enjoy a visit to one of the level routes in the locality. Open all year. £150 off peak £230 peak per week. Also short-term lets. 1 double bedroom, single wheelchair users welcome. Payphone, no smoking, no pets (guide dogs accepted), linen included.
ETB 3* Category 2 National Access Scheme
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Jay's Barn, Bradley in the Moors, near Alton, Staffordshire Moorlands ST10 4DF
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Cosy cottage by private woodland setting with attractive bird/wildlife. Great Highland holiday/touring base. Highest disabled category STB approved. 3 bedrooms, one with ensuite ceiling track/hot to bed, toilet and bath. Level wheel-in chair shower. highly recommended by wheelchair user. Sleeps 6. For brochure contact: Ian & Catriona Shearer, tel: 01479 851298, e-mail: woodheadcottage@hotmail.com

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CENTRAL BRITTANY FARMHOUSES
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PENROSE BURDEN NORTH CORNWALL "Holiday Care Award Winners"
Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service.
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NAISH HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Cliff-top park with "excellent" status. New Milton, Hampshire. Excellent site facilities within 100 yards, with indoor/outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, two bedroom fully wheelchair accessible, log cabin accommodation. Sleeps 6. Well furnished. Free club membership.

GRANGE COURT HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Park with "good" status. Goodington Sands, Devon. Excellent site facilities within short walk, with indoor/outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, 2 bedroom, fully wheelchair accessible mobile home. Sleeps 4-6, well appointed. Free club membership. (Purchased with funds from the National Lottery).

MILDENREATH HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Excellent seaside site with good facilities, just outside Looe in Cornwall. Restaurant, clubhouse, indoor pool. Fully equipped and wheelchair accessible 2 bedroom chalet accommodation. Sleeps 6 - well furnished and comfortable.
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Newlands Country House, Suffolk
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Sleep up to 6 per apartment. Wheel-in shower, shower chair, hoist available, easy access pool, close to bars, shops, and restaurants. Flights, insurance and transfer arranged. Call 08702 41 61 27 for brochure.

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Tel: 01472 210323 or 0795 102 1227

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BEST VIEWS IN DORSET - Award winning cottages on accessible family farm cats. 1, 2 and 3. Groups and families welcome. Accessible swimming. Tennis Court. Games Barn. Some aids available. Mrs Sue Smart, Hartgrove Farm, Hartgrove, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0JY. Tel: 01747 811830, fax: 01747 811066, email: cottages@hartgrovefarm.co.uk, web: www.hartgrovefarm.co.uk

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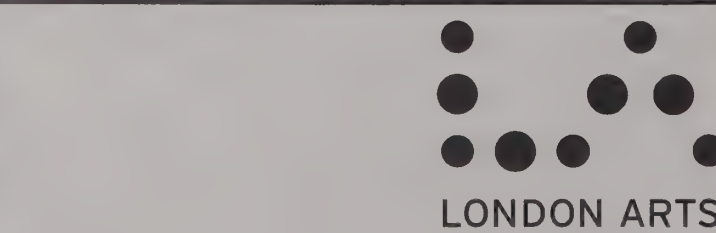
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• Grants



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To receive a copy of our leaflet with more details: telephone 020 7608 6100 textphone 020 7608 4101 email **info@lonab.co.uk** or visit **www.arts.org.uk/londonarts**

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)

The Parents Consortium
For children with disabilities and their families
The Parents Consortium
Are seeking a
Development Officer

The person is required to work 37 hours per week on a flexible basis. Annual Salary NJC scale point 26 - 31, £17,823 - £21,078, plus Outer London Weighting £444

And an essential car user rate. Holiday entitlement 20 days per year. Based from Allsworth Court, Hextable.

Duties will include coordination of volunteers working with the Parents Consortium, responsibility for the delivery of certain services, representation of the organization and local fund-raising

Closing date for applications Friday 22nd March 2002

Interviews will take place in the week commencing 25th March 2002

For application forms please contact The Parents Consortium, Allsworth Court, St David's Road, Hextable, Kent. BR8 7RJ. Telephone 01322 668501.

The Parents Consortium has a pro-active Equal Opportunities policy and works to the commitments of the "Positive About Disabled People" scheme.

• For Sale (cont. see pg 43)

Ford Diesel Mobile Classroom with full wheelchair access (ex-Lottery). Seats 6. H reg with MOT until April. £3,500ono. Bexley Trust for Adult Students, Jennifer Wadsworth or Richard Easterbrook - Tel: 020 8309 5570.

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1998 R Mercedes Vito Chairman, 113 Auto, 40,000 miles	£12,500
1998 R Brotherwood Alhambra, Auto, 22,000 miles	£18,750
1997 P Chrysler Voyager Chairman, 3.3LE Auto, 24,000 miles	£19,750
1996 N Transit, Semi Hi Roof. Tail lift, 24k miles	£8,750
Kangoo & Berlingo models	Choice of 7
Expert - Scudo - Dispatch models	Choice of 5
Trafic & Vanette Cango models	Choice of 11

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VW Caravelle 2.4D, '96 N, red. Lowering suspension, tip up forward facing rear seats, lowered rear access.	£9,975
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Skoda Cube 1.9D, WAV, '98 R, 42k miles, full lowered floor conversion.	£6,975
Renault Kangoo 1.9D WAV, '98 S, 44k miles, full lowered floor conversion.	£7,495
Renault Trafic Prima 1.7P, WAV, '93 L, 41k miles, 1 wheelchair + Driver & 4 Pass. Widnes conversion.	£3,795

New or ex-demo Renault Kangoo WAVs - call for prices and spec.
Wheelchair Accessible Motorhome, 2/3 Berth designed from new for disabled person use.
Base vehicle Mercedes 312D Auto '98 R. Remote Control rear doors & Ricon lift. Electric 6 way drivers seat. Plus best of other adaptations. Cost New £45,000. Please call for full specification & price.
All the above vehicles come with our Comprehensive Used Vehicle Warranty
95 Bonnygate, Cupar, Fife KY15 4LG
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website: www.gleneaglesconversions.co.uk



• Services

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Quality care provided within your own home by friendly, cheerful and energetic carers. A full range of care can be provided. Please enquire for details. Short/Long term - 24 hour service.

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• Personal

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Established 1987

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Fax: 01473 254030

E-mail: handicate@btinternet.com
Website: www.handicate.com
Freepost, Handicate, The Wellington Centre,
52 Chevallier Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2BR
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Alone? Why? You needn't be!
Any adult, any age, anywhere
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Single, bereaved, divorced, separated, partnered or married - choose your own ideal relationship to share all life's activities or needs of which you feel you are deprived. Your solution begins with:

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Tel/Fax: Int'l 00+44 or UK (0)1606 49093

• Research

Enabling Entrepreneurs Research Project

A new research project aims to look at different ways of ensuring that people with disabilities have access to advice and support to enter self-employment. Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and Humber, backs the project, entitled Enabling Entrepreneurs.

The link below is to an online questionnaire, which provides you with an opportunity to tell us about your experiences of becoming self-employed and any issues that could assist us with our research.

More information, including contact details is available at the site:
www.thebacktoworkcompany.com/enabling_entrepreneurs.htm or tel: 0113 262 2789.

Phab training Now booking

- Disability Discrimination Act
- Affordable Access Improvements

For information on courses call Gill Goldsmith, Phab, Summit House, Wandle Road, Croydon, CR0 1DF.
Tel: 020 8667 9443

www.phabengland.org.uk

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)



Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales

The Countryside Council for Wales is the statutory advisor to government on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment throughout Wales and its inshore waters.

Heathland Ecologist

Post No: S036

Location: Bangor

Starting salary: £16,800 to £18,480 (under review)

The heathland ecologist will support an active conservation programme in Wales by leading on all scientific aspects relating to upland and lowland heathlands. Key components of the post will concern the development of research & survey programmes to underpin site management, rehabilitation and re-creation projects throughout Wales.

The successful candidate will be of at least graduate calibre with a minimum of two years post-graduate experience in heathland ecology or conservation.

In return for your expertise and commitment you can expect a competitive salary with the opportunity to earn annual increases through performance related pay. Beyond that benefits include a non-contributory pension scheme, flexible working hours, paid public and privilege holidays, 5 weeks leave and an excellent working environment.

The ability to speak Welsh is not essential for this post. However, appointees learning or wishing to learn Welsh will receive full support from CCW.

For an application form and further details please contact Arwel Jones, within the Personnel Dept, Countryside Council for Wales, Maes y Ffynnon, Penrhos Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DN.

Tel: 01248 385504 E-mail: ar.jones@ccw.gov.uk

Or visit our website: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk>

The closing date for applications is 15 March 2002.

The Countryside Council for Wales is an equal opportunity employer and operates a no smoking policy - job share applications welcome.



The London Bubble
Theatre Company seeks a

PRODUCTION MANAGER



who will be a vital member of our team committed to creating theatre for, and with, people of all ages.

In addition to overseeing the technical aspects of all the company's work, the Production Manager will play a major role in planning and shaping projects, from our acclaimed promenade productions to ground-breaking participatory work in classrooms and communities.

To receive an application pack, please send an A4 SAE (57p) to:

Andrea Mason, London Bubble Theatre Company, 5 Elephant Lane, London SE16 4JD

Closing date for applications: **Monday 11th March**

London Bubble strives to be an equal opportunities employer

Registered Charity No.264359

• Courses



University of Leeds

Department of Sociology and Social Policy

Diploma/MA in Disability Studies

This unique and hugely popular programme of study gives students the opportunity to work for either a Post Graduate Diploma in Disability Studies or the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Disability Studies. The Scheme covers both the theoretical and practical issues relevant to disablement and the disability experience. It is designed for people working in or planning a career in the general area of disability related services.

Candidates will normally have a first degree or equivalent professional qualification, but relevant experience will be taken into account where appropriate. This course is taught in an accessible location and the University welcomes disabled students.

THIS POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA/MA IN DISABILITY STUDIES PROGRAMME IS ALSO AVAILABLE AS AN OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING PACKAGE.

For further details please contact MARIE ROSS or DEBBIE WESTMORELAND in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds, LS2 9JT.

Tel and Minicom (0113) 2334418 or (0113) 2334408

Direct Payments Support Worker Direct Payments Support Service for Slough (DPSSS)

Salary £18,000 pro rata. 20 Hours per week

DPSSS is a newly formed organisation of disabled people, whose aim is to promote and enable disabled people to access Direct Payments in the Slough Borough area.

The successful applicant for this Post will work in the development and promotion of a Direct Payments Scheme aimed at providing disabled people with the necessary information, support, skills and training, to become employers of personal assistants.

The person employed must be flexible and able to work and communicate effectively in different working environments within the Slough Borough.

You should have experience of working in the field of disability.

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer. We particularly welcome applications from disabled people and people from ethnic minority communities.

For an informal discussion and an application form Please contact: Sharmeen Zarat, Phoenix Centre, 305 Langley Road, Langley, Slough, SL3 8DA. Tel: 01753 541103

Closing date for application: 22nd March 2002.
Interview date: 4th April 2002.

BROMLEY speaking out for you

BAA promotes and delivers advocacy at its highest levels and standards, representing the voice of vulnerable people in the Bromley area. We are looking to recruit a Co-ordinator to continue to build upon our success.

DISABILITY ADVOCACY SERVICE CO-ORDINATOR

£14,836 + 5% Pens. Cont. 25hrs p.w. Based in Bromley - (Scope to expand to F/T by April 2003).

A service for disabled people run by disabled people. The appointed co-ordinator will have the opportunity to develop this new service. Candidates with disabilities meeting the minimum job requirement will receive an interview for this post.

Applicants for this post must have a minimum of two years advocacy experience. Be a good team player. Have experience of working with and supporting volunteers. Have an understanding of issues relating to disabled people. For a recruitment pack or further information please contact Anthony King, Director, Bromley Advocacy Alliance, on tel 020 8460 6712. Email: bromleyadvocall@aol.com Closing date for applications is 11th March 2002 with interviews scheduled for 20th or 21st March 2002.

BAA is an equal opportunities employer.

Registered Charity No. 1071906

• For Sale (con'td)

COTSWOLD COTS Build Cots and Beds for Adults and Children with Special Needs

We Design And Build Any Cot or Bed You Need.

New Products Extra Strong Playpens.
Extra Large Stairgates.
Fitted Padded Play Areas.
High Quality Fair prices
Information Phone 01993 842885

Brand New Unregistered
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Ricon Foldaway Chair Lift
EZ Chair Clamp in place of passenger seat
2 extra rear seats. Aircon. Save £thousands
Details from Drivelodge Tel 01535 637777

Accessible Vehicle Register

We specialise in locating used vehicles to suit the specific needs of our customers. If you are looking for an accessible vehicle or have one to dispose of, contact Adam Price. We also supply and install all forms of access equipment.

01202 814112
adam.price@lineone.net

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New and Nearly New, Electric Wheelchairs,
3 and 4 Wheel Scooters.
All models wanted and for sale.
Ring Free anytime
0800 074 6834
All major credit cards accepted



MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TEAM MANAGER

PO3 £25,473 - £27,717 Ref: 16/3614

Direct Payments Unit, Minehead Resource Centre, Minehead Avenue.
(This is temporary base, location to be determined).
37 hours per week. Flexitime

The Direct Payments Unit in Manchester has been at the forefront of developing Direct Payments, providing a service to a substantial number of recipients in Manchester, as well as managing contracts for other Local Authorities. The role of Team Manager in this service is a demanding one, with the key objective of increasing the numbers of people receiving Direct Payments in Manchester. As Team Manager you will be responsible for a team of Independent Living Advisers, as well as a team of support staff. Manchester presently holds contracts with four other Local Authorities, which you would be responsible for managing. If you have a total commitment to the social model of disability, a desire to see Direct Payments grow, and the ability to drive forward change, then this is the role for you. You will need to be confident in managing budgets and staff, as well as possessing a real understanding of the changing world of social care and support. You will have had experience in managing community care services either in statutory or non-statutory sector.

Application forms and further details available from the Personnel Section, PO Box 536, Town Hall Extension, Manchester M60 5BG.
Tel: 0161 234 3898 between 9.00am - 4.00pm only.
Minicom only: 0161 234 3833. Closing date: 18th March 2002.

All disabled applicants who meet the shortlisting criteria are guaranteed an interview.

We welcome applications from people wishing to job share.
Manchester City Council is an Equal Opportunity Employer and we positively welcome applications from women and men, regardless of their racial, ethnic or national origin, disability, age up to 65, sexuality or responsibilities for dependants.

Personal Assistance Adviser – full-time

**Surrey
Independent
Living
Council**

Registered Charity No. 1088220

Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) is an organisation of disabled people contracted by Surrey Social Services to provide information and advice on Direct Payments to disabled people in the county.

We are recruiting for the post of Personal Assistance Adviser. SILC is currently expanding Direct Payments to a larger and more diverse group of disabled people.

Based presently at SILC's Walton-on-Thames office you will work one to one with Disabled People who are either preparing for or already using Direct Payments. 35 hours p.w. (flexible), salary £19,653 to £22,980. The ability to travel throughout the area is essential.

Applications from Disabled People are encouraged. SILC is an equal opportunities employer.

For details please contact Nick Danagher on:
phone 01932 243527
minicom 01932 247792
fax 01932 245913

Closing date 27th March, interviews 9th, 11th or 12th April 2002.

artsline

Artsline, London's Information and advice service Disabled People on Access to the arts and entertainment is seeking to appoint a full time Disability Equality Training Officer, to deliver a high quality of disability equality awareness training and manage our freelance Trainers.

Salary £17,777 pa Gross

To obtain an application form and further details please send an A4 stamped addressed envelope to

Chief Executive, ARTSLINE, 54 Chalton Street, London NW1 1HS.

Completed applications should be returned to the above address by 22nd March 2002.

Artsline is equal opportunities employer.

We don't just care for our patients.

Established in 1992, Eastbourne Hospitals is a major acute Trust situated on the south coast, serving a population of around 250,000. The Trust employs just over 2,500 staff, has an annual budget of approx £85 million and recently gained 2 stars in the NHS Performance Ratings.

We achieved the Employment Service "Two Ticks" standard last year and take seriously our commitment to employ a workforce that more accurately represents the wider community. We positively encourage applications from disabled people.

We are dedicated to personal and professional development of our staff and offer excellent amenities.

To find out more about employment opportunities with Eastbourne Hospitals, please do not hesitate to contact Chantal Brown, Personnel Assistant, on 01323 414937 ext. 3445, or write to her in the Personnel Department, Eastbourne District General Hospital, Kings Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2UD, or by email on chantal.brown@ed.ebh-tr.sthames.nhs.uk

For a full listing of all vacancies, please contact the Personnel Department on 01323 414937 (24 hr voicemail).

Eastbourne Hospitals NHS Trust and Hastings & Rother NHS Trust are currently seeking approval for a management merger. If approved this will be effective from 1st April 2002.



Eastbourne Hospitals **NHS**

NHS Trust

The Trust is committed to equality of opportunity.
Job shares are considered for all positions.

DISCLAIMER – DN is not responsible for claims made in the adverts it prints. Readers are advised to check claims with advertisers before relying on them.

• Public Appointments

department for
education and skills



Board Member of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (the ALI)

Salary Range: expenses incurred in carrying out the Inspectorate's work

Commitment: minimum attendance at 4 meetings per year

Location: meetings will usually be held in the Midlands

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Board Member of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (the ALI). This is a unique opportunity to play a central role in improving the quality of adult education and work-based learning.

The ALI is an independent inspectorate whose work is key to the Government's aim of driving up standards of quality and effectiveness in post-16 learning. The ALI is responsible for inspecting education and learning for adults aged 19+ in colleges and for work-based learning for students over the age of 16.

The successful candidate will be recognised as having made a contribution in the field of adult education or work-based learning, appropriately experienced and qualified in their field and in a senior position, or recently retired from, an organisation committed to lifelong learning or Investors in People. Interest in equality of opportunity and diversity issues would be particularly welcome. The successful candidate will be appointed for an initial term of four years.

THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS IS COMMITTED TO MAKING APPOINTMENTS BY FAIR AND OPEN PROCESSES, TAKING ACCOUNT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.

For further information and an application form, please send a postcard or e-mail bearing your name, address and reference "ALI-Board" to:

Ms Ginny Randall, Department for Education and Skills, Level 1E, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

Email address:
pba.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is **25 March 2002**

Applications are particularly welcome from disabled people, members of ethnic minority groups and women.



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

department for
education and skills



Disability Claims: Lay members to serve on the special educational needs tribunal

The Special Educational Needs Tribunal is an independent body, and its function is to consider appeals by parents against decisions made by Local Education Authorities about children's special educational needs. The Secretary of State for Education and Skills is responsible for appointing lay members to serve on the Tribunal. From September 2002, the Tribunal's remit will be extended to handle school disability discrimination cases under the terms of the 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, and it will then be known as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

We are looking for a number of new lay members who have knowledge and experience of children with disabilities, preferably within education. Applications are particularly welcome from people familiar with diversity issues.

Lay members will be expected to be available to hear appeals on between 20 and 70 days per year from 1 September 2002 and are paid on a daily fee basis.

For an application form and further details, please write to Mr D Wilbur, SEN Division, Room 2D, Department for Education and Skills, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. Alternatively E-mail on daniel.wilbur@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications is **Monday 18 March 2002.**

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)

BECAUSE WE'RE ALL
DIFFERENT...MARKETING AND
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTORLondon
Package c. £60,000

Habinteg Housing Association is the leading practitioner of inclusive Universal Housing for physically disabled and non-disabled people alike. We work with more than 30 local authorities and partners throughout the UK and provide over 2000 homes, including over 500 specifically designed for wheelchair use.

Growth at any cost is not our message: developing the Diversity debate so that difference and individual experience in all its forms is valued, celebrated and supported is Habinteg's goal. Our initiative is bold: to achieve it will need a step change in our culture, structure and effort.

You will lead in promoting this philosophy, developing flagship housing schemes and influencing the inclusion agenda at all levels.

Creativity, drive and commitment to our aims are essential. You will need at least five years experience of successful operational and financial management at a strategic level, to include managing capital development and leading on new business opportunities.

We offer 30 days' holiday, SHP final salary pension scheme, permanent health insurance and season ticket loans.

Closing date: 8th March 2002

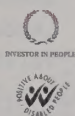
First interviews: 18th March 2002 Final interviews: 22nd March 2002

For an information pack, please contact

HACASChapmanHendy

First Floor, 4 Copthall House, Station Square, Coventry CV1 2FL
Telephone: 02476 551188 or Email on recruitment@hch.eu.com
or visit the website at www.hch.eu.com

In line with our goals on Diversity we welcome applications from every section of the community. CVs will be accepted with a supporting statement.



Looking for a Job?

Here's a **unique and exciting opportunity**
- the **first job of its kind!!**

Connect - the Communication Disability Network
has a new, **paid job** with **flexible hours**
for a **person who has aphasia**.

A '**communication supporter**' will be
paid to support this job



This **job** will **help Connect** to **involve** people
with **aphasia** in the **organisation**



Interested?

Come to an **open meeting** about the **job**. Find out more about it!

Come to Connect on **Friday 8th March 2002** from
11 until 1 followed by **lunch**

Visit our website to find out more about Connect -
www.ukconnect.org

Please call, email or write to **let us know** if you would like to come:

Sally Byng, Connect, 16-18 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL
telephone 020 7367 0868, email sallybyng@ukconnect.org

Please pass this on to anyone you know who might like to come

If you understand BSL,
you'll welcome our commitment

Communication Support Worker (part-time)

£17,073 - £24,936 (pro rata)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for promoting the national interests of the United Kingdom and contributing to a strong world community. To do so they are committed to recruiting and retaining the best people.

With this commitment in mind and with the specific aim of improving opportunities for hearing impaired staff so they are able to maximise their contribution, we are keen to appoint a BSL Level 3 Trainee Interpreter, on a part-time basis, initially for one year but with the possibility of permanent status. Working three days a week, or equivalent, you will be

The FCO is an equal opportunities employer and aims to reflect the diversity of British society. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified individuals irrespective of race, gender or disability.

part of a personnel team handling all aspects of diversity and best management practice, with your role including interpreting, welfare support, organising awareness programmes and supporting BSL training.

To apply you should be at least a British Sign Language (BSL) Level 3 Trainee. You must also have good IT skills preferably in Microsoft Word and Outlook, and be able to demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and the necessary initiative to make a real success of a newly-created role.



Foreign & Commonwealth Office



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



For further job details and an application form (to be returned by 8 March 2002), write to Capita RAS, Innovation Court, New Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 7JB or telephone 01325 745170 (24 hours) or fax 01256 383787. Internet: www.capitaras.co.uk Please quote reference number B6286.

CAPITA RAS
www.capitaras.co.uk

Conditions

Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews (tel: 020 7619 7320), fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham (see contact details above).

DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

• Next Issue

Disability**NOW**

Look out for the employment supplement –
April 2002. To advertise Contact:

Richard Gresham, tel: 020 7619 7336
email: richard.gresham@scope.org.uk

Patrick Durham-Matthews, tel: 020 7619 7320
email: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

• Contracts and Tenders (cont. see pg 46)

INVITATION TO TENDER:

TYPES AND QUALITY OF KNOWLEDGE IN SOCIAL CARE

SCIE invites organisations to tender for a review of the types of knowledge underpinning social care and ways of assessing their quality.

SCIE has the responsibility to develop a rigorous and robust methodology for assessing social care knowledge. Proposals are invited to undertake an 8 month project on two aspects of this work: defining the types and definitions of social care knowledge, and reviewing the ways of assessing the quality of different types of knowledge.

The project will start in May and finish in December 2002. SCIE expects organisations tendering for this work to demonstrate the involvement of senior and experienced staff, and the participation of user-controlled organisations. Funding of up to £80,000 is available. The commissioning brief is available from the address below, or from www.scie.org.uk

Proposals must be received by **26th March 2002**.

Contact: Fiona MacLeod, SCIE, 1st Floor, Goldings House, 2 Hay's Lane, London SE1 2HB. Tel: **020-7089-6859**.
Email: fiona.macleod@scie.org.uk

SCIE

Social Care Institute for Excellence

• Holidays (con'td)
The Algarve, Portugal

Small hotel owned and run by English family. Home from home. Happy and friendly. Home cooked food. Diets catered for. All bedrooms en-suite. Our own swimming pool and grass bowling green. Golfing bookings can be made. We are fully equipped for wheelchair users, their families and friends. Met at Faro airport. For brochures and flights with A.T.O.L. agents, tel: 01235 521804

FREEDOM OF THE GLEN HOTELS

Choose from 3 hotels in spectacular lochside settings near Fort William. Enjoy the freedom to select the hotel which sets the right atmosphere for your break. A choice of 10 rooms with disabled facilities, around the loch. E-mail: reservations@freedomglen.co.uk Tel: 01855 8215821, Fax: 01855 821463

www.freedomglen.co.uk

Orlando, Florida. Home with a heart for disabled travellers! Spacious, luxury, adapted bungalow situated on golf course. Three double bedrooms, two bathrooms (Manger bathlift installed). Cable TV, Telephone. Free Country Club membership. 24 hour on call Management Company. 15 mins Orlando Airport. 20 mins Disney. Paraplegic owner. Sue Fisher, 5 Park Lane, Broughton Park, Salford M7 4HT. Tel/Fax: 0161 792 3029.

BIRCHAM, WEST NORFOLK Coast 5 miles. Two F.C.H disabled-friendly holiday cottages designed with wheelchair users and their families in mind. One sleeps 4 and one sleeps up to eight. Both have wheel-in shower rooms. Equipped to the highest standard. TV, linen and electricity inc. Smokers and dogs welcome. For further details please telephone 01485 578603 or visit www.norfolkdisabled-friendlycottages.co.uk

Norfolk, Nar Valley Holiday Cottages

3 self-catering, all wheelchair accessible, 1 with wheel-in shower room, 2 with airbaths. Mostly en-suite. On working farm - peaceful location, central for beaches and tourist attractions. Indoor heated swimming pool. More details and prices, contact: Rosemary on 01760 338797.

North York Moors National Park

Moonpenny Cottage, Levisham, nr Pickering. Self-catering cottage - sleeps 4. Fully equipped to a very high standard and designed specifically to accommodate the wheelchair user as well as the able bodied. South facing and over-looking paddock and hills beyond. Full details/brochure from Mrs Amicia Bentley Tel: (01751) 460311 Category 1, National Accessible Scheme.

• Contracts and Tenders (con'td)

SPECIALIST DISABILITY SUPPORT FOR ADULTS - CAN YOU DELIVER?

The Employment Service has recently changed the way in which it contracts with programme providers as part of the Welfare to Work agenda. We now intend to extend this approach to those organisations that provide specialist disability support for adults. The new approach involves moving to a two stage process.

Stage 1 will involve an initial assessment of your company or organisation based on your systems and performance.

Stage 2 will allow companies who meet minimum requirements the opportunity to tender for specific contracts.

Our range of contracts involves work preparation for people with disabilities, work placements and personal development programmes.

If you are interested in delivering these programmes we are asking you to register your interest. In return you will be sent a pack requesting more detailed information about your company. Packs will be sent out when you register your interest.

The deadline for return of the packs will be 28th March 2002.

Register now by telephoning Gaynor Jones on 0117 9456909 or e-mailing at gaynor.jones@employment.gov.uk

If you are an existing work preparation contract holder you do not need to contact us. We will automatically contact you.



Employment Service

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)


Metropolitan Police Authority

WANTED – Someone who believes Londoners deserve the best police service in the world

The Metropolitan Police Authority maintains an efficient and effective police service for the Metropolitan Police District.

We have a vacancy for an Independent Member to join us in our work to oversee the UK's largest police service, with a staff of 35,000 and an annual budget of more than £2 billion.

You will be a forward thinking, dynamic person with strong views on how to build a partnership between all of London's diverse communities and the Metropolitan Police.

Whatever your experience, in management, finance, public service or community relations, your input must be positive and constructive.

You will attend meetings of the MPA full authority and its committees, keep up to date with policing issues, attend community and police consultative meetings and liaise with representatives of local communities.

If you are aged 21 or over, have lived or worked in London for at least 12 months, and are able to commit 1-2 days a week to this important work, we would like to hear from you. Your appointment will be normally for four years. You will receive a basic allowance of £13,000 and reimbursement for expenses.

For an information pack and application form, please contact Alan Johnson on 020 7944 8935, or visit our website at www.mpa.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is 6 March 2002.

The MPA is an equal opportunity employer, committed to diversity.

www.mpa.gov.uk



Disability Discrimination Act Service
information • advice • representation

SENIOR DDA LEGAL ADVISOR/MANAGER FULL TIME 37 HOURS £23,430 pa

THE POST HOLDER WILL HAVE AT LEAST 3 YEARS
EXPERIENCE OF ADVICE WORK AND REPRESENTATION
AT EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS AND COUNTY COURT

A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISABILITY
DISCRIMINATION ACT, EMPLOYMENT LAW AND
HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION, EXPERIENCE OF
MANAGING AND SUPPORTING STAFF

THE CONTRACT WILL RUN UNTIL 31ST SEPTEMBER 2004
POSSIBLE EXTENSION WITH FURTHER FUNDING

The Leeds DDA Service Is an Equal Opportunities Employer
For A Full Job Description and an Application Form Contact
Closing date 15th March 2002

Leeds DDA Service
Unit 9, Armley Park Court
Armley
Leeds LS12 2AE
Tel 0113 263 5597
Fax/Minicom 0113 263 6062



The Disabled Drivers' Association is seeking an Information Officer/Caseworker

To provide an information and support service to our 21,000 members and other callers. Ideally candidates should have some working knowledge of disability rights and benefits, the Motability scheme and mobility provision for disabled people.

Based at our modern headquarters in a rural setting 10 miles southwest of Norwich. Excellent access for disabled people in a no smoking environment.

Salary negotiable. 37½ hour week. Flexible working arrangements, including job share, will be considered.

All applicants will be given equal consideration. Candidates with a disability will be regarded as having an additional qualification. Information pack available from Ref IO/C, The Disabled Drivers' Association, Ashwellthorpe, Norwich, NR16 1EX. Email DDAHQ@aol.com Closing date 3 April 2002

Registered charity 254544 – Helping disabled people become more mobile

DEADLINES

April 2002 classified deadlines:

Booking: 15th March.

Copy: 19th March.

A RIGHT ROYAL TREAT



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NB: Blenheim Palace opens to the public on 11 March.
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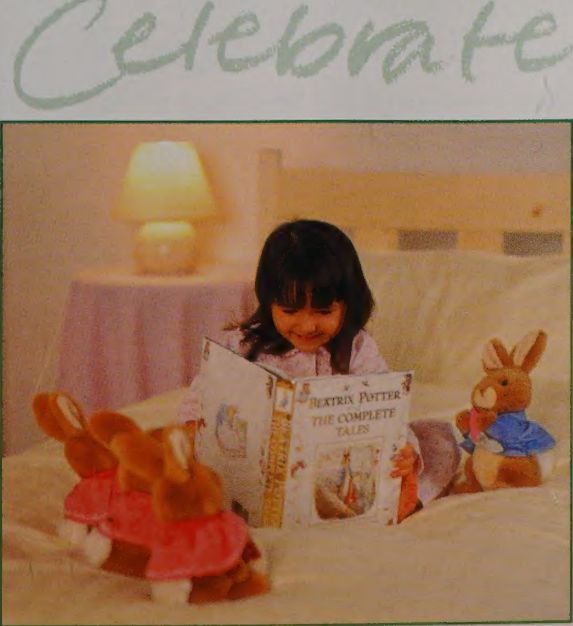


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DN next month



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DN's 12-page employment supplement will cover everything you need to know to get started, or stay in work if you become disabled

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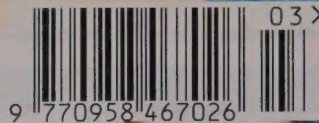
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